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Canonization of the Blessed Martyrs of Damascus
20th October 2024, St. Peter's Square

In the framework of the celebrations of the Eighth Centenary of the death of St. Francis 1226-2026, in the commemorative year of the Stigmata 2024, on Sunday 20 October Pope Francis proclaimed eight Friars Minor of the Custody of the Holy Land, martyrs of the faith in Damascus in 1860, saints. They are accompanied in martyrdom and glory by the three blessed Massabki brothers, lay Maronites.

In July 1860, the persecution of Christians by the Shi'ite Druze in Lebanon spread to Syria. On the 9th July, the populous Christian quarter of Damascus was set on fire and the people put to the sword. Christians of various denominations and rites suffered all sorts of violence. That same night the Franciscan friary of St. Paul was also attacked.

The eight religious who lived there – seven of Spanish nationality and one of Austrian nationality – together with three lay Maronite collaborators who had taken refuge there, were slaughtered for refusing to deny their Christian faith and embrace Islam. The bodies of the martyrs, pitifully recovered a few days after the massacre, were buried in a common tomb



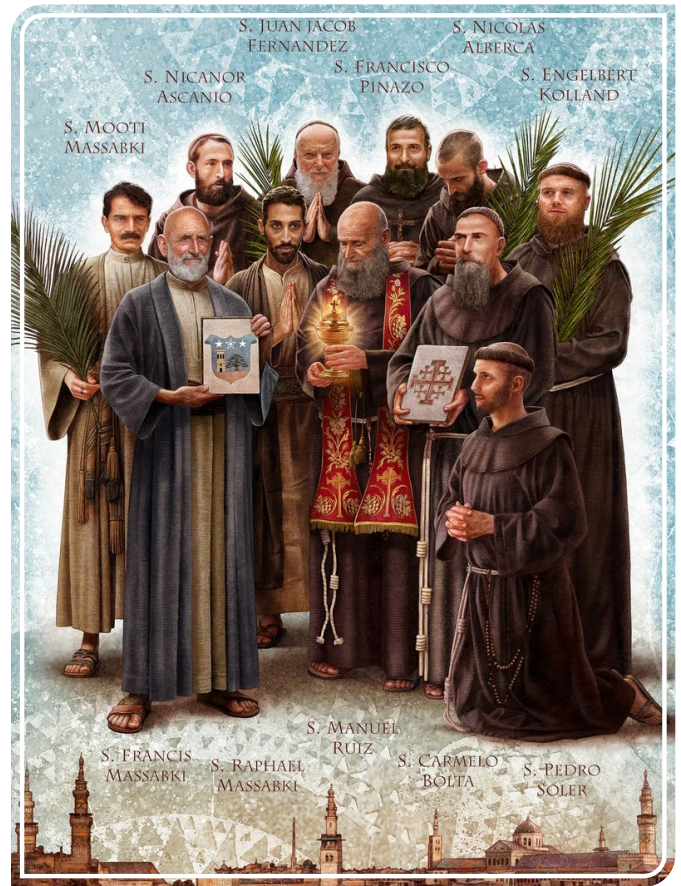
which, with the rebuilding and consecration of the friary church in 1866, became a destination of devotion by the Christians of Damascus.

In 1872 the Order of Friars Minor began the process for the beatification of Manuel Ruiz and the seven confreres. With a special procedure authorized by Pius XI at the request of the Maronite Patriarchate, the names of the three Massabki brothers, collaborators of the religious, were added to the group of Friars Minor shortly before the beatification. The rite was solemnly celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on the 10th October, 1926.

In the Consistory of the 1st July 2024, Pope Francis established that the solemn Canonization would come to pass in St. Peter's Square on Sunday the 20th October, 2024, World Mission Day.

The new saints of the Order of Friars Minor and of the Maronite Catholic Church are Manuel Ruiz

López, Carmelo Bolta Bañuls, Engelbert Kolland, Nicanor Ascanio Soria, Nicolás María Alberca Torres, Pedro Nolasco Soler Méndez, Francisco Pinazo Peñalver, Juan Jacob Fernández, Francisco Massabki, Mooti Massabki, Raffaele Massabki.



Read their biography on www.ofm.org



Government of the Order

The new Southern European Conference is born *Restructuring of the COMPI and CONFRES Conferences*



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From the 7th to 11th October 2024, the Assembly of COMPI and CONFRES was held at the General Curia of the Friars Minor, which marked the birth of the new Conference of Friars Minor of Southern Europe (CEM). The Provincial Ministers of Italy,

Spain, Portugal and Albania, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. Cesare Vaiani, reflected together on future perspectives and common priorities, focusing on initial and ongoing formation and possible common projects within the framework of JPIC.

On the 10th October, the Ministers of the CEM listened to the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, who, inspired by the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 3:1-15), invited the friars to ask the Lord for a "heart capable of listening", essential in a time of transition and change, such as ours. He highlighted that "it is essential to open up to others and seek together how to live life according to the Gospel today, as contemplative friars and minors in the world for the mission." The restructuring of the two Conferences, in fact, is not just an organizational issue, but part of a broader vision of renewal, which calls

us to face the challenges with an open and collaborative spirit. The Minister also underlined how Italy and the Iberian Peninsula have been, for centuries, pillars of the Order, with friars who left on missions to Latin America, China and other lands. Today, although we are experiencing a reality of weakness and downsizing, we are called to redesign the face of the Order, “enlarging our tent” to include new languages, cultures and different ways of living the Franciscan vocation. Finally, quoting St. Paul, he exhorted the friars not to act “out of a spirit of rivalry or vainglory, but with humility, considering others superior to themselves” (Phil 2:3-4).

This attitude of service and mutual respect will be essential to build an authentic fraternity in this part of Europe, focusing on a few but clear objectives, including attention to young people and vocations, crucial challenges for the future. The path that opens up with the birth of the CEM should not frighten us. We too, as Friars Minor, are invited to walk this path together, listening to each other and opening ourselves to a new fraternity that transcends national and cultural boundaries. It is time to welcome differences as an expression of a “creative fidelity” that enriches the whole fraternity.



The Assembly, which in these days has seen us share limits and concerns, dreams and projects, which has seen us pray and share moments of fraternity in serene harmony, has also elected the first CEM Council in the persons of Piloni Br. Francesco, president; Arregui Guridi Br. José Mari, vice president; Ridolfi Br. Michele Antonio, councilor; Crisci Br. Livio, councilor; Zurera Ribó Br. Joaquín, councilor.

COMPI Secretariat

General Curia Agenda



- ☑ Up until the 23rd October, Br. Taucen Girsang, Deputy Director of the JPIC Office, will participate in the meeting of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia.
- ☑ On the 24th & 25th October 24, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, and Br. Konrad Cholewa, Definitor General, will be in Zagreb (Croatia) for the blessing of the Franciscan friary church rebuilt after the earthquake.
- ☑ From the 25th October till the 1st November, Br. Massimo will be in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the fraternal visit to the Province of the Holy Cross.
- ☑ On the 26th October, Br. Konrad will be in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (Poland) to participate in the event on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Stigmata, which will be attended by the three Franciscan Obediences of Poland.
- ☑ On the 26th October, Br. Ignacio Ceja, Vicar General, will participate in Belvis de Monroy, Extremadura (Spain) at the closing of the Congress “The Franciscans in Hispanic America: Review and Interpretation of the Legacy of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico”.
- ☑ On the 28th October, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General and Director of the Guardianship Office, and Br. Joseph Condren, Secretary of the same office, will participate in Lecce (Italy) in the ongoing formation meeting of the friars of the Province of the Assumption of the BVM, to deepen the theme of the Protection of minors and vulnerable adults.
- ☑ From the 28th October-1st November, Br. Cesar Külkamp, Definitor General, will be in Anápolis, Brazil, for the Chapter of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.
- ☑ From the 4th to 11th November in the General Curia there will be the meeting of the Tempo Forte.
- ☑ From the 4th -7th November, the General Curia will host a meeting on New Forms of Franciscan Life, which will be attended by Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas, Secretary General for Missions and Evangelization, Br. Dennis Tayo, General Animator for the Missions, and, on the 5th November, also the Minister General.

Br Massimo Fusarelli's Visit to Mexico

Province of Saint Francis and Saint James



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From September 25 to October 1, Br Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by Definitor General Br Joaquin Echeverry, visited the Province of Saint Francis and Saint James in Mexico. They spent these days in three different areas, Zapopan, Guadalupe Zacatecas and Monterrey, where they visited the friars, the formation houses, some shrines, and some other places where the friars are dedicated to service and evangelization.

The theme of the visit was, "Brothers in minority, be not afraid to go out." The Minister General was following up on the 2021 General Chapter's invitation to leave what is comfortable with a renewed call to mission, as we strive to think more about

the needs of the Order than just our local Province. The visit had a wonderfully fraternal feel to it as the friars warmly welcomed Br Massimo and Br Joaquin, who also had an opportunity to greet the Poor Clare Sisters, and the Secular Franciscans, as well as many friends and collaborators who assist the friars in their service to God's people and fill their lives with joy.

The visit to the center of migrants in Monterrey by the Definitor General marked the last stage of this trip and left the door open to further conversation around the important topic of ministering to migrants and striving for peace, especially when confronted with violence.

Tempo Forte



Ordo Fratrum Minorum



Secretarius Generalis

**Communiqué of
Tempo Forte
September 2024**
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Br Massimo Fusarelli visits Canindé, Brazil

Province of St. Anthony of Padua



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On Wednesday evening, October 2, Br Massimo Fusarelli arrived in Canindé, Brazil, for a fraternal visit of the local Franciscan fraternity and to celebrate the feast of Saint Francis. The Minister General had announced at the end of last year that he hoped to visit this beautiful place during their time of elaborate Franciscan celebrations.

Thursday morning Br Massimo celebrated Eucharist for the Poor Clare Sisters and then sipped coffee with them as they discussed their challenges and



their hopes with regard to living out the charism of Saint Clare today. His second gathering that morning took place at Saint Anthony’s Friary where the novices were excited about the feast of Saint Francis and were happy to share stories and listen to words of encouragement from the Minister.

In the afternoon, Br Massimo, along with Br César Kulkamp and Br Rogério Lopes, Definator General and Minister Provincial of Saint Anthony of Padua Province, respectively, took part in a radio broadcast entitled “Franciscan Pope,” on the Friary’s Web Radio. Br Robert Alves, host of the show, led them through a spirited discussion which tapped into the great wisdom of his three guests. [...]

The Minister General ended his visit celebrating the Transitus with thousands of pilgrims in the Praça dos Romeiros square. Br Massimo began his homily apologizing for his poor limited Portuguese but then affirming all those who come to Canindé “as pilgrims, each with a unique histo-

ry and unique wounds, but commonly believing that the Lord walks with and among His people.” During his reflection, in which he had the rapt attention of the faithful, Br Massimo remembered the various hurts and hardships of the people in northeast Brazil. He asked that we invoke Saint Francis in our prayers for them, “that their pains may open them up to new life, just as the Lord desires for us all.”

At the conclusion of the Transitus, Br Massimo Fusarelli gave the friars of the sanctuary at Canindé a chasuble and a medal commemorating the 800 years since the gift of the Sacred Stigmata was given to Saint Francis.

On October 4, the Minister concelebrated a Mass with 9 other concelebrants, presided over by Archbishop Gregório Paixão from the Archdiocese of Fortaleza.

Br Roberto Alves, OFM
Photos: Caio Renan and Jander Silva

Letter from the Minister General



On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of St. Camilla Battista Varano, the Minister General of the OFM addressed a Letter to the Poor Sisters of St. Clare and the Friars Minor, the Franciscan Contemplatives and Sisters, the Franciscan Laity and Lay Sisters. Download the PDF:

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



News from the Order

Prayer for peace in the OFM fraternities

7th October, 2024



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Many fraternities of the Order have responded to the invitation of Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, to dedicate the day of the 7th October to prayer and fasting for peace in the world.

The friars of the Custody of the Holy Land gathered in the Church of St. Saviour, in Jerusalem, to pray the Rosary together and ask God for the gift of peace through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Mysteries were recited in different languages and before the Litany the Custos, Fr.

Francesco Patton, read the Holy Father's "[Letter to the Catholics of the Middle East](#)", released on the same day.

In Assisi, in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels in Porziuncola, the Franciscan Family and the Diocese gathered for the recitation of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, presided over by Fr. Massimo Travascio, Custos of the Portiuncula, in the presence of Msgr. Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop of the Dioceses of Assisi - Nocera Umbra - Gualdo Tadino and Foligno, and of many the faithful and pilgrims. During the prayer, a video message from Cardinal Pizzaballa who, in this way, wanted to be virtually



present in the land of St. Francis. "I too have been tempted to close the doors - he said in the message - and not trust my neighbour: yet, now more than ever we need to convert ourselves and to open ourselves up to the other and be able to rebuild relationships,

with the hope and faith of those who are convinced that the Lord, who rose from the dead can bring life back again, even where it seems that death reigns".

The Friars Minor of the community of Brezje in Slovenia, together with Radio Ognjišče and many pilgrims, gathered at the

Marija Pomagaj National Marian Shrine: after praying the joyful and luminous Mysteries, they celebrated the Eucharist presided over by the Cistercian abbot Maksisimilijan File, who emphasized the importance of the Rosary: "The Holy Rosary focuses us on Jesus Christ, which is the Way, the Truth and the Life," said the abbot, suggesting it as a tool against sin and violence. This was followed by the recitation of the Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries.

The friars of the fraternity of St. Mary Mediatrix also accepted the invitation of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem: the recitation of the Rosary was also

Solemn Professions



12th October, Prov. St. Francis Stigmatized (Italy)

Br. Emanuele Ferraresi, Br. Samuele Rovai, Br. Massimo Siboldi.

5th October, Custody of St. Francis of Assisi (Guinea Bissau)

Br. Boner João Cá, Br. Nivarildo Sagui Monteiro, Br. Abrão Mutaro Candé, Br. Sumba Mário Quibolo, Br. Mogna Salna Tchami

5th October, Custody of St. Clare (Mozambique)

Br. Zito Waliza, Br. Araujo Daniel

5th October, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

Br. Giuseppe Faraci, Br. Cristian Gualandris

Information received from the General Secretariat

attended by the Provincial Ministers of COMPI and CONFRES, present in the General Curia for the meeting between the two Conferences.

In the general audience on the 9th October 2024, Pope Francis asked the pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square to value this traditional Marian prayer: "I urge you all to recite the Rosary every day, abandoning yourselves trusting in the hands of Mary. To her, caring mother, we entrust the sufferings and the desire for peace of the peoples who suffer the madness of war".

On the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, on 4th October at 12.00, in the locality of Croatian Catholic Mission (HKM) at Zurich, the Franciscans from the Province of Erzegovina who are missionaries in Switzerland together with Switz Franciscans who do their pastoral work in Zurich come together to prayer for peace. Br. Ivan Prusina, responsible for HKM in Zurich, greeted all who were present and



thanked them for having come to the meeting which started with a prayer for peace in the whole world more especially for peace for Ukraine and the Middle East. Prayer in Croatian language was led by Br. Antonio Šakota, responsible for HKM of Berna.

After the prayer for peace the Franciscans remained for fraternal meeting and sharing.



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Solemnity of St. Francis 2024 3 and 4 October

Philippines



The entire Franciscan family in central Luzon gathered in Mandaluyong City to celebrate the Transitus of our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi. The St. Francis of Assisi Parish under the administration of our brother Capuchin serves as the venue for this year's Transitus and through the animation of the Inter-Franciscans Ministers Conference (IFMC) on October 3, 2024.

The celebration kickstart with presentations from various religious communities and OFS fraternities. A short talk on the theme "Rejoice, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances: Emulating the Exemplary Life of St. Francis" by Br. Christopher Dominic Lim, OFMConv, Chairperson

of IFMC ensue. He emphasizes that prayer is a gift from God. Active participation in the Liturgy does not only mean that we respond during the celebration but rather our lives should be a prayer itself. He encourages all the Franciscans present to make prayer as part of their daily lives.

Students from Lourdes School of Mandaluyong lead the reenactment of the Transitus through a drama. It starts with the exposition of Francis' journey to Portiuncula and climaxing on his embrace of Sister Death and the Crucified Christ.

The Transitus culminates in a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Rev. Br. Norman Meram Gandia, Parochial Vicar of St. John Baptist Parish, San Juan City. A Franciscan agape is set immediately after the mass. There are simultaneous Transitus celebrations among different geographical locations in the Philippines by different Franciscan communities.

Br. Makki Cruz, OFM



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Assisi

On the morning of the 3rd October, Br. Ignacio Ceja, Vicar General, began the celebrations of the Feast of St. Francis with the Eucharist in the Basilica of St. Clare. In his homily when he referred



to the fact that Francis, after the encounter with the Christ of St. Damian, did not remain alone with the miraculous event, but led him to the encounter with lepers, “I believe, therefore, Sisters, that today Clare and Francis invite us more than just to stop at the consideration of a miraculous event, but in fact, to reach the essential, to consider the repercussions that the sign of the stigmata has on our life and mission,” he told the sisters. After the Mass, the Vicar General made a fraternal visit to the Poor Clare Sisters and visited the first place where St. Francis had been buried. [...]

On the 4th October at 7:00 a.m. in the Basilica of St. Francis, Br. Ignacio celebrated the Eucharist in commemoration of the feast of St. Francis, where he recalled the VIII centenary of the gift of the Stigmata, highlighting two points: “It is necessary that, like Francis, we climb the mountain of contemplation. We are called to be men and women of prayer” and later he went on to say “On the other hand, we must keep in mind that if we are truly in communion with Jesus, our lives will be dedicated



to the service of our brothers and sisters. A love as great as that of Christ on the Cross can only be responded to with love.”

At 10:00 a.m. the clergy together with the superiors of the Franciscan family celebrated the Solemn Mass in the Basilica of St. Francis, presided over by Msgr. Antonino Raspanti, Bishop of Acireale and President of the Sicilian Episcopal Conference, during the celebration the “Votive Lamp of the Municipalities of Italy” was lit with oil offered by the Region of Sicily. The celebration was also attended by Civil and Military Authorities, representatives of the Municipalities of Sicily and pilgrims from the Dioceses of Sicily.



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General Curia



In the evening of October 4 the Mass on the occasion of the Solemnity of St. Francis, at which the Master of the Order of Preachers, Br. Gerard Timoner, presided, was celebrated at the General Curia.

In his homily he said to the brothers: “This is my hope and prayer for you, dear brothers, to re-read the life of St. Francis, and to be found in your vocation, as preachers of the Gospel, witnesses of brotherhood in a world divided by hatred, of living evangelical poverty, in a world which values the accumulation of riches over social and environmental responsibility”. [...]

At the end of the celebration Br. Ignacio Ceja, Vicar General, in the name of the Minister General, thanked Br. Gerard for his visit to the General Curia.



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Canindé (Brazil)

The Sanctuary of Canindé which is situated in the North eastern region part of Brazil is the point of reference for the whole year in as far as the spiritual life is concerned. Many people arrive there from all over the country.

With almost 300 years of devotion to the stigmata of St. Francis, he is known as “of the stigmata” and many times the pilgrims identify themselves with these marks of suffering which are always accompanied by the hope of Saint Francis of Assisi who is always alive on the altar. Be it entering the Basilica on one’s knees, wearing brown clothes which resemble the Franciscan habit, removing the hut, or leaving pieces of wood as the reminder of the graces obtained, the pilgrims leave in the place the sign of their faith by making the place to be a big center of Franciscan spirituality.

In order to celebrate the feast of the stigmata of St. Francis, this year, a program was organized. It

begun with the first 24 hours of September and continued until the Solemnity of St. Francis on 4th. “The wounds of Christ present in St. Francis and in the life of the people” was a central theme of the celebration. The faithful had an opportunity of having early the program, contemplating the way of the cross and later a series of movements such as masses, processions missionary animation.

At the sunset, the nights of the novena were crowned by the whole day of prayer and devotion by the pilgrims. This moment of faith is known as “Praça dos Romeiro” which comprised a big show of 110 persons, coming every together with the faithful. [...]

The feast was concluded by the mass which was presided by the Minister Provincial Br. Rogério Lopes and, the metropolitan Archbishop of Fortaleza Rev Gregório Paixão and Br. Gilmar Nascimento, the Rector of the sanctuary. [...]



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Deceased Brothers



† 12th October, in Madagascar: Br. Jacques Tronchon, Prov. Blessed John Duns Scotus (France and Belgium).

† 12th October: Br. John Leonard Ostdiek, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA).

† 9th October: Br. Gualberto Gismondi, Province of St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy).

† 4th October: Br. Rafael Roldán Moreno, Prov. 12 Apostles (Peru)

Information received from the General Secretariat

Chapters of Mats



Province of the Holy Trinity, Chile

7th-9th October 2024



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With the motto “Fraternity, Reunion, Reconciliation and Healing”, from Monday the 7th to Wednesday 9th October, the Franciscan Brothers of the Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile celebrated their Chapter of the Mats at the “Alvernia” Retreat House (San Francisco de Mostazal) 48 friars from the 15 Franciscan presences in the country participated.

This fraternal meeting is part of the process of Provincial Moratorium that the Province has been experiencing since 2022, at the request of the General Government. For this reason, the Chapter had the fraternal and motivational presence of the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, and the Definitor General and Visitor General of our Province, Br. César Külkamp, OFM.

In his initial greeting to the friars of the Province, the Minister General reminded us that “the mora-

torium was intended to be a pause for a global look at their reality, with an orientation to their future (...) a global view of the reality of each friar, of each fraternity of the Province.” In addition, he asked us to “continue working on the care of the path of each brother, the friar is at the centre. And in the perspective of mission”, since “the seriousness of the moratorium will be seen precisely in this style: new relationships and openness to mission”.

The methodology of the Chapter of the Mats was characterized by work in small fraternities gathered around a round table to live the conversation in the Spirit (synodal methodology).

In the first days of the meeting, the friars discussed and reflected on the results of the Active Listening work that was carried out in the month of June, motivated by Sr. Mariana Peña, psychologist and religious of Providence. This exercise sought to listen to the Spirit through the communities and neighbours, knowing and discerning his gaze on the life and mission of the Franciscan friars in Chile. Along with the motivations promoted by the friars of the Preparatory Commission, the capitulars were accompanied by the reflection of Sr. Sandra Henríquez, Teresian Carmelite. Her motivation sought to promote paths of encounter, reconciliation and reparation in the life of the Province. On the last day of the Chapter, the brothers moved to the city of Santiago to make a



pilgrimage from the Church and friary of St Francis of Assisi of la Alameda (headquarters of the Provincial Curia and the oldest Franciscan presence) to the Church and friary of the Franciscan Recoleta, where the mortal remains of the Venerable Br. Andresito rest, a credible witness of Franciscanism in Chile. From two or three, the friars who walked easily amongst and with the people

who at that time were passing through one of the busiest streets of Santiago.

The Eucharist was celebrated in the Franciscan Recoleta, presided over by Br. César Kulkamp.

Br. Ronald Villalobos, OFM.

Communications Office Manager

Province of St Peter and St Paul of Michoacán, Mexico 23-25 September



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“...And wheresoever the brethren are and meet one another, let them show themselves familiar to each other, and yes...” (Rb. VI)

The Lord, giver of all good things, granted us to celebrate our Chapter of the Mats 2024, according to the guidelines drawn up by the Order. The meeting took place from the 23rd-25th September at the “Beato Bartolomé Laurel” House, in Celaya, Gto. The friars of the different branches of the Franciscan Order, present in the territory of the Province of St. Peter and St. Paul of Michoacán in Mexico, namely: the Order of Friars Minor, the Order of St. Clare, the Order of the Immaculate Conception, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the Secular Franciscan Order and the Franciscan Youth attended.

The activities of the Chapter were aimed at reflecting on the fundamental nuclei of the Charism inherited from the Seraphic Father Francis, under the method of seeing-judging-acting. The work of this Chapter was carried out through working groups. Each of these tables was made up of one of the participating branches of the Franciscan family. In the different moments of work, in groups and in the plenary session, we reflected on the reality of the experience of the Franciscan charism in our Prov-

ince, identifying strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and challenges. The characteristics of the charism and the witness of life that should emerge from it were deepened. Finally, enlightened by the previous work, activities were proposed that help us to live the Franciscan charism more faithfully in today’s world.

The celebration of this Chapter of the Mats was, without a doubt, a moment of grace for all the participants, because it was possible to experience the joy that springs from the Gospel, which is Christ, to breathe the charismatic fraternity that unites us and to live the charity of fraternal corrections. We thank God for the opportunity he has given us to open our horizons, perhaps very focused on ourselves, with the help of the brothers and sisters of our other Families who generously and charitably accompanied us and who, it is worth emphasizing, also felt reflected and challenged in this exercise of fraternal dialogue and discernment.

We hope that the fruits of this Chapter can be concretized little by little in the life project of each brother and of each Fraternity, so that we can advance together in the conformation with our Lord Jesus Christ, source and culmination of our journey as Friars Minor.



Animation of the Order



Inauguration of the 2024-2025 Academic Year of the PUA

14th October, Pontifical University Antonianum



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On the 14th October, inauguration of the Academic Year 2024-2025 of the Pontifical University Antonianum (PUA) was held in Rome, this year dedicated to the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Bonaventure.

In the Eucharistic celebration celebrated in the Basilica of St. Anthony Lateran, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the OFM and Grand Chancellor of the PUA, focused on the word freedom ("The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" - 2 Cor 3:17). Freedom is the gift of Christ through his salvific act, it is the perspective from which thought is born: "Accepting the navigation of thought is an exercise of freedom and therefore of salvation received. Hence the blessing of the name of the Lord, which Psalm 112 renewed in this assembly," said Br. Massimo in his homily.

The event at the Antonianum Auditorium, moderated by Prof. Carlos Esteban Salto Solà, OFM, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, saw the participation of Prof. Agustín Hernández Vidales, OFM, Rector of the university, Prof. Stéphane Oppes, OFM of the Faculty of Philosophy and finally Br. Massimo Fusarelli.

In his speech, Br. Massimo Fusarelli cited Pope Francis' Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, in which the Holy Father emphasizes the importance of ecclesiastical studies in the evangelizing mission of the Church. Reaffirming the value of the PUA, the Grand Chancellor said: "We continue to need as an Order and as a Family an academic center that, in network with other centres on the different continents, makes its contribution to living this time in a critical and wise way in the light of Revelation and the Franciscan spiritual and intellectual tradition. with a competent reading of the peculiar conditions of our time, to encounter cultures in a creative way, favoring the proclamation of the Good News and thus declining with life and thought the originality of the Franciscan charism."

With reference to the ongoing Synod, he recalled how in the final document of the first session the urgency of "a theology capable of shared discernment on the so-called controversial questions" was reiterated: looking at the "frontiers" of today, not only physical, and finding theological answers to them, according to Br. Massimo. Immigration, integral ecology, war, artificial intelligence are just some "places" from which to "learn to think today with humility and patience".



In conclusion, the Minister General of the OFM underlined the importance of meeting with the forms of thought of other continents and cultures outside the West, such as Asia and Africa, also adding the need for a renewal of religious universities as requested by Pope Francis last August 30.

The Rector Magnificent, before presenting the report on the academic year that has just ended, underlined how the beginning of this new year is also characterized by war, but that at the same time there is a Church on a synodal journey that listens to the faithful.

Looking ahead to the new year, Br. Agustín announced that on the 26th November, the new “Code of Ethics of Conduct”, strongly desired by the Grand Chancellor, will be presented to the students of the PUA.

Prof. Oppes presented his report entitled “750 years after the Second Council of Lyons and the



death of Bonaventure: provocations of the thought of the Seraphic Doctor”.

Download the greeting of the Minister General and Grand Chancellor of the PUA ([Italiano](#))

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

Meeting of the Animation Offices with the African Conference *Lomé (Togo), 8th –13th October 2024*



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From the 8th to 13th October 2024, the meeting of the Animation Offices of the General Curia with the respective offices of the African Conference was held in Lomé, Togo.

About 25 friars participated, including Br. Victor Luis Quematcha, Definitor General, Br. Francisco Gomez Vargas and Br. Dennis Tayo of the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelization, Br. Darko Tepert and Br. Hieronimus Yoseph Dei Rupa of the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies, Br. Daniel

Nicolas R. Blanco and Br. Taucen Hotlan Girsang of the General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). Br. Virgile Agbessi, President of the African Conference and Minister Provincial of the Host Province of the Incarnate Word, Br. Siphellele Gwanisheni, Vice-President of the Conference, and representatives of the respective Offices of the African Entities (Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Kenya, Central African Republic, Rwanda and Burundi, South Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau).

Each office of the Curia presented a report and projects; Afterwards, participants from each of the three Offices were allowed to meet and make suggestions on the way forward.

Some of the topics covered included the need to strengthen collaboration between the Entities, the creation of the “African Network” group to assess situations and share resources, share personnel in different Entities, work with the rest of the Franciscan Family, promote new missionary adventures, assist the neediest Entities, train formators, improve communication. Some final proposals were drawn up in the various areas:

Formation and studies: Every two years there should be a formation of formators at the level of the African Conference, considering issues of Mission and Evangelization, JPIC and interreligious dialogue.

Mission and Evangelization: Support for missionary projects for the Franciscan presence on the continent, including the presence in Nigeria, is recommended.

JPIC: There should be a network of collaboration between the friars of the African Conference for the pastoral care of the stigmatized, i.e. migrants, refugees, vulnerable people, and for the care of creation.

On the last day, the assembly listened to the encouraging message of the Minister General, who empha-

sized the need for collaboration, appreciated the gift of vocations in the Conference and invited the friars to deepen an “African flavour” in expressing the Franciscan vocation.

The rest of the meeting offered the friars of the General Curia the opportunity to meet and learn about the reality of the activities of the friars in Togo and the houses of formation of the Province that are located in this part of the country, particularly the Postulancy and the Novitiate.

Similar meetings have already taken place at other conferences. The objective of the General Curia is to carry out a synodal fraternal discernment to promote collaboration between the Offices of the General Curia and similar offices in the Entities.

Meeting of the Commission on Safeguarding General Curia, 25-28 September



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The International Commission on Safeguarding in the OFM gathered for the second of its in-person meetings in the General Curia from 25 to 28 September.

The agenda focused on those Entities that have already submitted policies which have received a nihil obstat from the Minister General and the Definitory, those policies which are subject to revision before receiving a nihil obstat, and the entities that have not so far submitted a policy. Mandate 9 of the General Chapter of 2021 extends to every entity of the Order and there is urgency to complete the task in the year ahead.

How to foster contact between those friars who have benefited from training in the field of Safeguarding, particularly those who received the diploma from

the Gregorian University, is a way of addressing the isolation some Delegates experience in their role.

Another focus was about how to integrate Safeguarding Training into Franciscan Formation. The Commission worked to assist the Director, Br Albert



Schmucki, in drawing up an appendix to be included in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*.

A highlight of the meeting surprised the members. It was the visit to the atelier of Br Sidival Fila OFM, whose art focuses on

revealing what is hidden from sight. Br Sidival uses the lining of vestments and other pieces, even cloth affected by mould, to bring to light what is hidden. In offering the hidden a respectful gaze, its dignity is honoured.

The members of the Commission were struck by the harmony between this outlook and what happens in Safeguarding after, unfortunately, abuse has taken place, when the hidden story is listened to, honoured, and dignity is granted to the victim.

Especially enlightening also was the input from Br Agustin PoDESTÀ from Argentina who shared his work on economic abuse as well

as Daniel Fleitas’s survey of the book “Abuse in the Latin American Church” [ed. Véronique Lecaros and Ana Lourdes Suarez].

Finally, priorities for the years ahead were established before the meeting concluded.

Sudan and South Sudan
St Francis of Assisi Foundation
Special General Assembly from September 27 to 30



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The St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Sudan and South Sudan convened its Special General Assembly from September 27 to 30, 2024.

The assembly was aligned with the visitation of the General Definitory for Africa and the Delegate General for the Foundation, Br Victor Quematcha, OFM, the General Animation for Missions, Br Dennis Tupas Tayo, OFM, and the Development Office General Director, Br Nikola Kozina, OFM. It was attended by seven solemnly friars and two temporarily professed brothers.

The assembly aimed to review and assess the status of implementation of the previous January 4 to 8, 2024 Assembly Resolutions, to evaluate and visit areas for potential assistance in the Foundation’s existing projects, to hold the Foundation Council Meeting, and to assess and determine the foundation’s direction, particularly regarding where to expand its new presence in Sudan. Among other decisions, the friars unanimously agreed to establish a

new mission in Wau, South Sudan, and to assume responsibility for the parish of San Kizito Parish in Ngodakal.

This conclusion followed three evaluative visitations and the establishment of collaboration with the local ordinary, the Franciscan sisters working in Wau, as well as the parishioners of St. Kizito Parish.


The friars believe that these are sufficient avenues for them to deliberate and make a well-considered decision while keeping in mind the Franciscan charism of being present among the poor and in the periphery. The visiting friars also went to existing chapels and related projects of the Foundation.

Particularly, the Street’s Children Program “Peace and Good People” (PGP), was acknowledged for the significant efforts made by the friars in the Foundation and its volunteers who work with street children and provide healthcare services to them. Practical recommendations were put forward on how to enhance this ministry.

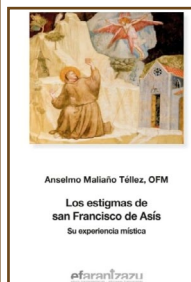
Additionally, all the friars in the foundation unanimously recognize the pressing need to address the construction of the Parish Church due to its extremely poor condition, requiring an evaluation of its structural safety for continued use.

Finally, Br Peter Tindo, the President of the Foundation, submitted these Special Assembly Recommendations to the Minister General for his final approval, expressing gratitude for the timely visit of the friars from the General Curia and their dedication and spirit of sacrifice in the various concerns of the Foundation.

Franciscan Bookmark




Los estigmas de san Francisco de Asís
Su experiencia mística



Fr. Anselmo Alberto Maliaño Téllez, OFM

Ediciones Franciscanas Arantzazu

Francisco de Assis
Uma vida inquieta



Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM

Editora Vozes



Consistory for the creation of new cardinals Three OFM friars on the list announced by the Holy Father



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The Holy Father, in the Angelus of October 6, announced that next December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a Consistory will be held for the creation of new cardinals, among whom there are Monsignor Luis Gerardo Cabrera Herrera, OFM, Archbishop of Guayaquil, Ecuador; Monsignor Paskalis Bruno Syukur, OFM, Bishop of Bogor, Indonesia; and Mons. Jaime Spengler, OFM, Archbishop of Porto Alegre.

“Let us pray for the new Cardinals, so that by confirming their adherence to Christ, the merciful and faithful High Priest, they may help me in the ministry of Bishop of Rome for the good of all the holy people of God”, said the Pope. The Min-

ister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, sent his best wishes to the future new cardinals: “I express my best wishes for service to the universal Church and to our three brothers appointed Cardinals by Pope Francis. Through them, the internationality of the Church and also of the Order is made visible, called to serve the Holy People of God in diverse cultures and traditions. This, while honoring the entire Order, also commits us to responsibly broaden the boundaries of our path as friars minor in mission”.

Biography of Mons. Luis Gerardo Cabrera Herrera, OFM

Biography of Mons. Paskalis Bruno Syukur, OFM

Biography of Mons. Jaime Spengler, OFM

Appointments



The Holy Father has appointed as Bishop Prelate of Ayaviri (Peru) Rev.do Br. Benigno Condori Chuchi, O.F.M., currently parish priest of San Antonio de Padua in Puno.



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Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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