



## Greetings from the Minister General for the Nativity of the Lord 2024

To all the Friars Minor of the Order  
To the contemplative Sisters of our Family  
To the Sisters of the TOR and to the brothers  
and sisters linked to our Order

*This Christmas, let us walk as pilgrims of hope, on the path of peace, to build together a more welcoming and fraternal common home.*

On the Holy Night of this Christmas 2024, Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of the Jubilee 2025 for pilgrims of hope. How much we need it! We too become pilgrims to Greccio with St. Francis, who climbs to the hermitage carried precisely by hope:

His highest aspiration, his commanding desire, his firmest will was to observe the Holy Gospel perfectly and always and to follow faithfully with all vigilance, with all diligence, with all the enthusiasm of soul and fervour of heart the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and to follow in his footsteps. (1Cel 30:84).

My wish for this Christmas 2024, where hope is put to the test, is threefold:

**Nurturing the desire for hope:** The word “pilgrims” evokes a journey, guided by desire, trust and the will to build bridges between the present and the future. Hope helps us not to extinguish the will and the heart, so as to believe that it is possible to build a livable future for many. For this reason, hope is a priority virtue for this time: following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus nourishes and renews it.

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**Opening paths to peace:** hope today means opening paths to dialogue, reconciliation and unity among peoples. This pilgrimage seems impossible today. It becomes so if it begins in each one of us, in our fraternities, with the people with whom we live: let us echo the cry of humanity that invokes peace by constantly interceding for it.

**Caring for the “common home”:** how can we nourish hope today without supporting together the shared responsibility of caring for the common home and making it a welcoming and fraternal place for all? In Greccio Francis prepares the woods, the grotto and the animals for Christmas. Let us also go up to Greccio to become capable of caring for the human, for creation, for each creature.

Hope is the virtue that allows us to face what seems greater than us, but not impossible. It is a gentle light that guides us on our journey: is it not perhaps hope that accompanied Francis in the last years of his life, which we are remembering? Is not the Cantic of the Creatures interwoven with hope?

Moreover, are not the words “Hear, sisters”, addressed by St Francis to St Clare and her sisters precisely 800 years ago, a breath of hope also for our life of discipleship today? Let us sing all these words in full voice with a life of praise and service!

With my fraternal good wishes for the Nativity of the Lord, filled with His peace for all of you and for the entire world.

Your brother and servant,

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM  
*Minister General*

Rome, 22nd December 2024  
*IV Sunday of Advent*

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## Opening of the Centenary *of the Cantic of the Creatures*



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In 2025 we celebrate the eighth centenary of the composition of the Cantic of the Creatures.

Francis of Assisi, in the spring of 1225, a few months after the experience of La Verna, wanted

to spend a period of fifty days at the monastery of San Damiano, where Clare and the first Poor Clare Sisters lived.

During that stay at San Damiano, after a night troubled by the pains of his illnesses but also visited by the Lord who had given him the certainty of His love and salvation, Francis composed that hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God, which we all know.

As with past Centenaries, also on this occasion a celebration of the entire Franciscan Family will officially start the Centenary: the event will be held on the 11th January, 2025 and will begin at 10:00 a.m. in San Damiano, and then continue in the Basilica of St. Francis where it will conclude at the end of the morning. We wanted to start from the place

where Francis composed most of the Cantic and praised God for all His creatures, and conclude where his mortal remains rest, to sing next to him and with him the last stanza, composed shortly before his death: “Praised be you my Lord, for our sister bodily death”.

The two parts of the celebration can be followed online on the [www.centenarifrancescani.org](http://www.centenarifrancescani.org) website.

Those who want to participate in person will be able to choose one or the other place: the other part of the celebration will be screened in both shrines.

On the website it will also be possible to download the booklets with the text of the celebration in different languages.

# NATIVITY Scenes OFM





## Nativity scenes in the Americas



*Above all other solemnities, he celebrated with ineffable solicitude the Nativity of the Child Jesus, and called the feast of feasts the day on which God, made a little infant, had sucked from a human breast. He kissed the images of those childish limbs with an avid heart, and the compassion of the Child, pouring into his heart, also made him stammer words of sweetness in the manner of children. This name was sweet to him like a honeycomb in his mouth [...].*

*He wanted the poor and beggars to be satisfied with the rich on this day, and that the oxen and donkeys should receive a more abundant ration of food and hay than usual.*

*(2Cel 151,199-200)*



Presepe Parrocchia San Francesco d'Assisi  
Campo Grande, Brasile



Presépio Marialda Coury, Fraternità Nossa Senhora  
de Lourdes - Provincia Santa Cruz, Brasile



Presépio Ruiy Moura, Fraternità Nossa Senhora de  
Lourdes - Provincia Santa Cruz, Brasile



Templo de San Francisco de Asís Sombrerete  
Zacatecas México



Parroquia San Juan Bautista  
Boquete, Panama



Nacimiento refectorio curia prov. ss. Pedro y Pablo  
Mexico



Parroquia Apóstol Santiago de Castro  
Chile



Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane  
Alberta, Canada



Our Lady of Guadalupe Friary  
Hebbronville, Texas, USA



Main entrance of Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre in  
Cochrane Alberta, Canada



Nacimiento templo de San Fco  
Celaya, Mexico



Parroquia San Francisco de Asís de la Alameda  
Santiago, Chile



Iglesia Nuestra Señora de Coromoto y San Antonio  
Ciudad de El Tigre, Venezuela



Parroquia Patronato San Antonio  
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Chile



Parroquia de San Francisco de la Cisterna  
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Parroquia Nuestra Señora del Rosario  
Zumba, Ecuador



Fraternidad de la Recoleta Franciscana  
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Fraternidad del Instituto Leones  
León Guanajuato México



Fraternidad del Postulantado InterProvincial  
San Antonio de Arredondo, Argentina



ICProvince. St Anthony  
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Curia Provincial, Provincia Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe  
Guatemala, America Central



Convento di São Francisco de Assis  
Campo Grande, Brasile



Convento San Antonio de Padua  
Ciudad de El Tigre, Venezuela



Convento del Patrocinio de San José  
Loja, Ecuador



Colegio San Antonio de Padua  
Ciudad de El Tigre, Venezuela



Basilica de San Francisco (Prov XII Apostolorum)  
Lima Peru



Mostra di presepi nel Convento di Penha  
Brasile



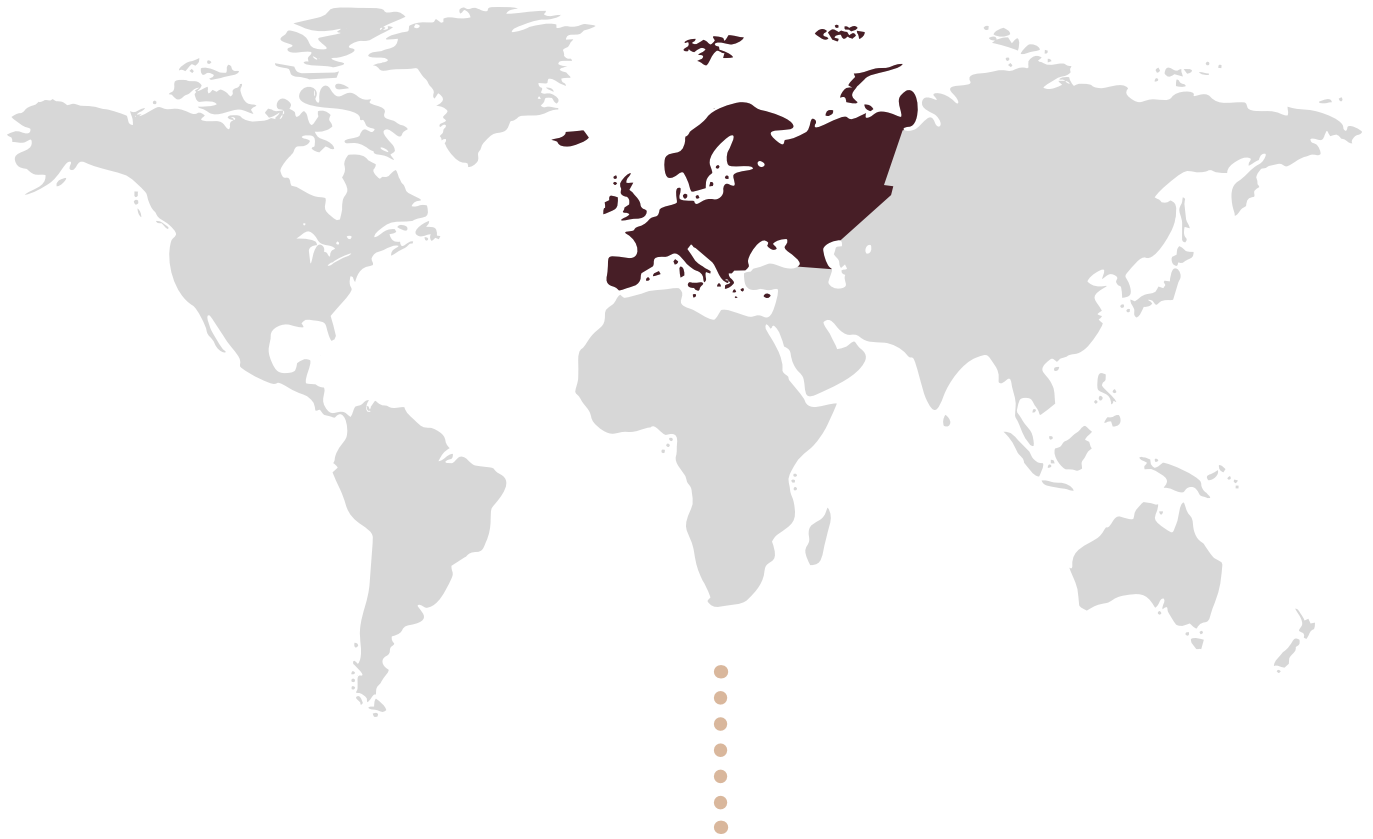
Mostra "Natale Franceseano"  
Ecuador



Real Monasterio de Sta Clara de Manila, Katipunan  
Quezon City, Philippines



## Nativity scenes in Europe



*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city; and Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, whilst they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

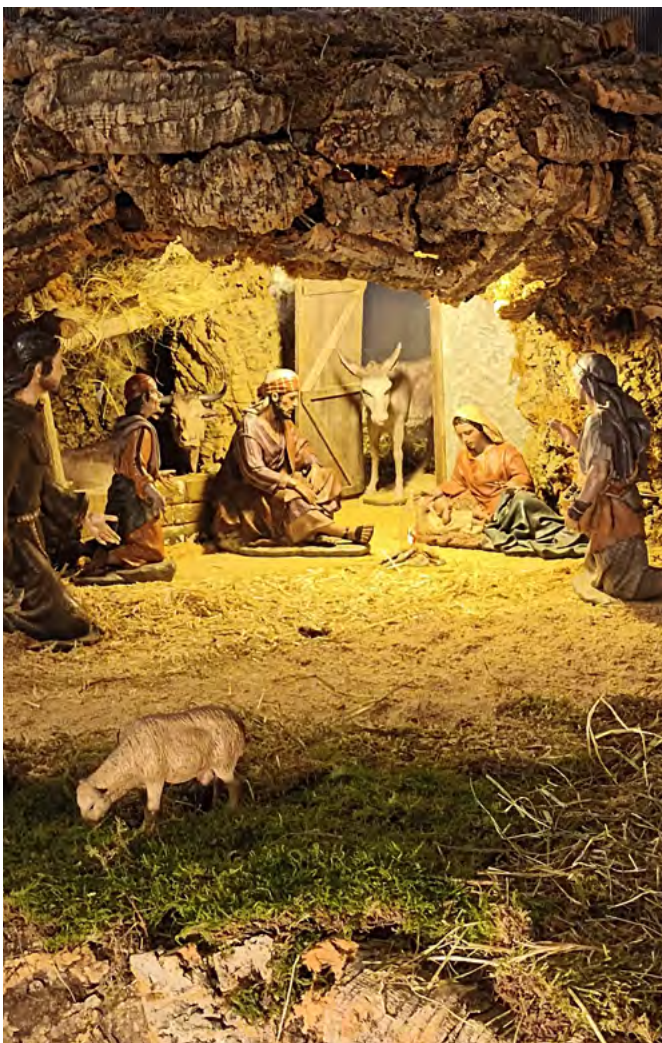
*(Lk 2:1-7)*



Basilica di Sant'Antonio di Padova  
Afragola (NA), Italia



Chiesa del convento e parrocchia di Sant' Antonio di  
Padova - Lanciano, Italia



Parroquia San Antonio del Retiro  
Madrid, España



Chiesa di San Paolo presso di Facoltà di teologia  
Sarajevo, Bosnia ed Erzegovina



Chiestro del Monastero delle ss. Stimate Francesco d'Assisi - Alvernia, Polonia



Convento S. Vito, Santuario Madonna della Speranza Marigliano (NA), Italia



Curia de la Provincia de la Inmaculada Concepción Madrid, España



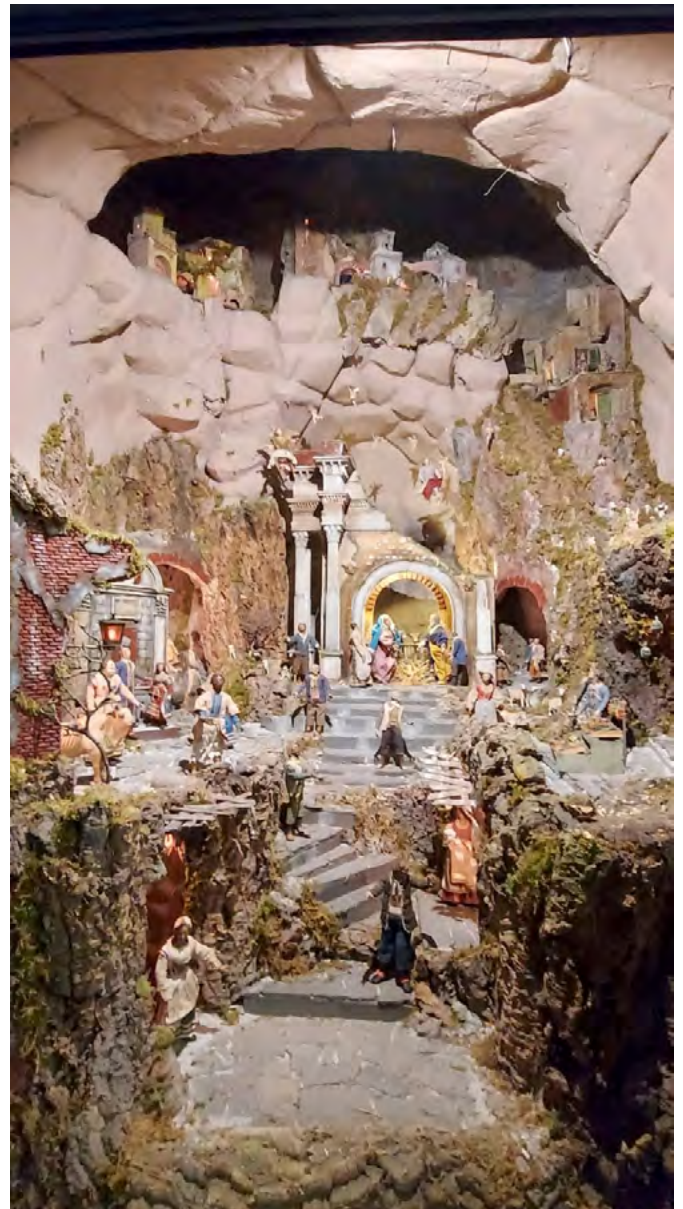
Basilica di San Ludovico Re Prov. dell'Assunzione della BVM - Katowice, Polonia



Franciscanos OFM Coruña, España



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Latina, Italia



Parrocchia S. Maria dell'Arco in Miano  
Napoli, Italia



Chiesa del convento S.Maria delle Grazie  
Leverano (Le), Italia



Parrocchia S. Antonio viareggi  
Italia



St. Mary of Jesus Church, Valletta  
Malta



Chiesa del Monastero delle ss. Stimmate Francesco  
d'Assisi - Alvernia, Polonia



Fraternità Sant' Anna  
Dorsten, Germania



Santuario Madonna della Speranza  
Marigliano (NA), Italia



Vélez (Provincia Franciscana dell'Immacolata)  
Malaga, España



Mostra parrocchiale dei presepi  
Bordighera, Italia



Infermeria Franciscana e Casa Antoniano  
Lanciano, Italia



San Francesco d'Assisi e San Giovanni Battista  
Görlitz in Germania



Fraternity Heilig Kreuz  
Essen, Germany



## Nativity scenes in Africa



*In this regard, what the saint accomplished three years before his glorious death, in Greccio, on the day of the Nativity of the Lord, is worthy of perennial memory and devout celebration. [...] About two weeks before the feast of the Nativity, Blessed Francis, as he often did, called him to him and said: “If you want us to celebrate the Nativity of Jesus in Greccio, go before me and prepare what I tell you: I would like to represent the Child born in Bethlehem, and in some way see with the eyes of the body the hardships in which he found himself for the lack of the things necessary for a newborn baby, how he was laid in a crib and how he lay on the hay between the ox and the donkey”. As soon as he had heard him, his faithful and pious friend went away in haste to prepare everything necessary in the designated place, according to the plan set forth by the Saint.*

*(1Cel, 30,84)*



The Nativity in the Chapel of the Autonomous  
Custody of Our Lady of Kibeho - Burundi, Rwanda



## Nativity scenes in Asia and Oceania



*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

*(Lk 2:8-14)*



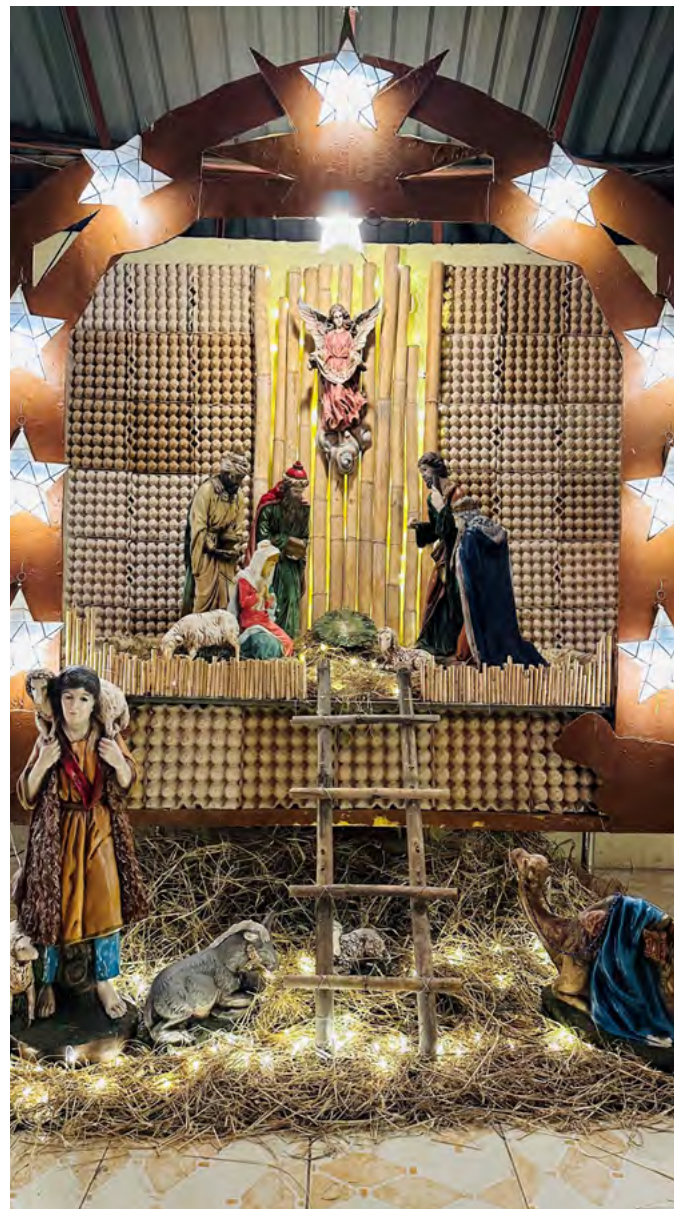
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St Anthony Friary, North Guwahati, Assam North East India



Thalangama Our Lady of Angels Friary Christmas Crib  
Sri Lanka



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The next issue of Fraternitas will be published on January 15, 2025.

## Happy holidays to all!

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Curia Generale dei Frati Minori  
Via di S. Maria Mediatrix, 25  
Roma, Italia

**Director:** Br Byron A. Chamann Anléu OFM

**Translators:** Br. John Luke, Br. Arthur Andersen, Br. Cyrianus Korongo

## OFM

Ordo Fratrum Minorum  
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