

# International Bulletin

# Fraternitas

## Ordo Fratrum Minorum

353

Edition

Volume LVIII | 19th March 2025



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## The birth of the new African French Speaking Conference OFM

### Lomé (Togo), 27 February 2025

The Provincial Ministers, Custodes and Presidents of Foundations of Seven African Entities met from 26-28th of February in Lomé Togo so as to erect the New African French Speaking Conference (CAF) of OFM and programme the activities for the year 2025.

The New Conference is composed of the following Entities:

- The Province of the Incarnate Word of West Africa;
- The Province of St. Benedict the African (Democratic Republic of Congo);
- The Province of St. Mary of the Angels (Democratic Republic of Congo);
- The Custody of St. Francis of Assisi (Guinea Bissau);
- The Custody of the Immaculate Conception (Madagascar);
- The Foundation of our Lady of Africa (Congo Brazzaville);
- The Foundation of St. Mary of the Angels (Central African Republic).

On 26th February Br. Maciej Olszewski, the Guardian of the General Curia, presented the theme “Fraternity in International and Intercultural context”, which was fol-



lowed by the presentation of Br. Franco Mirri, the Director of Foundation OFM Fraternitas who presented the history of the foundation, mission and the practical aspects to be followed while presenting the projects. Br. Victor Quematcha, General Definitor for Africa was also present.

The presentations were followed by the election of the leaders of the New Conference by the Provincial Ministers, Custodes and Presidents. By the Decree of the Erection of the New Conference they elected: President: Br. Virgile Agbessi (Province of Incarnate Word) Vice President: Br. Nicodème

Muambata Mukatsala (Province of St. Mary of the Angels). Secretary: Br. Armando Cossá (Custody of St. Francis of Assisi).

Following the erection of the [new Anglophone African Conference](#), this new body for the animation of the Order is also part of the process of complete revision of the current structure of the Conferences, as formulated in Mandate No. 31 of the 2021 General Chapter.



## Franciscan Centenaries

### Reading the Cantic of the Creatures in over 30 languages *San Damiano, a place of praise and meeting of cultures*



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On 26 February, at the Sanctuary of San Damiano in Assisi, the “Francis between the Lines” initiative was officially launched, as part of the celebrations of the Centenary of the Cantic of the Creatures. During the event, hosted by journalist Valentina Antonelli of TGR RAI Umbria, the Cantic was read in over 30 different languages by students from all over the world, from two universities in Perugia and by several Religious of the Franciscan Family.

Br. Mauro Botti, Guardian of San Damiano, opened the event by recalling how Francis, in November 1224, arrived at San Damiano tormented by illness. He brought his audience back to a night of intense suffering for Francis in which he did not ask to be freed from the pain, but prayed for the strength to patiently bear it. It was precisely in this context of profound suffering that the inspiration for the Cantic was born. “Here, with this reading of Francis

between the lines, we will embark on a journey to discover Francis the Troubadour... Today in concert with the world, we are called to give harmony to Francis’ words. We are the “troubadours of the Lord,” said Brother Mauro, reflecting on the figure of God’s little minstrel. He borrowed this image from the writer G.K. Chesterton who described Francis as a man who saw the world “upside down,” offering humanity a unique perspective on reality.

Professor Roberto Rettori of the University of Perugia began his remarks by calling the gathering a meeting of cultures. “This is a special moment in which 30 languages help form one and the same culture. It is an extraordinary moment, because it is, in fact, a uniting of cultures, of different languages which represent different cultures and even different religions.” He also highlighted how the Cantic is an extraordinary song of praise for the gift of life, offering words that should overcoming every cultural and religious barrier.

Professor Valentina Carbonara of the University for Foreigners of Perugia compared the gathering to Pentecost, a time when the Apostles received the Holy Spirit and were able to communicate with people of different languages and cultures. This multilingual gathering represented a moment of profound union between different cultures, where a common language emerged: that of human experience and gratitude for the beauty of creation.

# Chapters



## The Provincial Chapter of the Province of St. Junipero Serra of Mexico

*Br. Carlos Antonio Minjares Hinojosa, OFM, was elected as Minister Provincial*



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The Province of St. Junípero Serra of Mexico celebrated the Elective Provincial Chapter from the 23rd to the 28th February, presided over by Br. César Efraín Santrich Bermúdez, OFM, during which they elected Br. Carlos Antonio Minjares Hinojosa, OFM, as Minister Provincial and Br. Felipe de Jesús Santiago Ortega, OFM as Vicair. They also elected the following friars as Provincial Definitors: Br. Isaac Israel Núñez Llamas, OFM; Br. Juan Ignacio Muro Aréchiga, OFM; Br. José de Jesús Alcaraz Valle, OFM; Br. Juan Carlos Salinas Valdez, OFM; Br. Jesús Iván Cortés Osorio, OFM.



## General Curia Agenda



- ☑ Up until the 21st March, the Tempo Forte will be held in the General Curia.
- ☑ On the 21st March, Br. César Kulkamp, General Definitor, will participate remotely in the Meeting of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference with the Office for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults. From the 25th to 29th he will be in Cordoba (Argentina) for the II General Assembly of the Brazil and Southern Cone Conference.
- ☑ From the 23rd to 29th March, Br. Konrad Cholewa, General Definitor, will participate in the regional meetings of the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius (Croatia).
- ☑ From the 23rd - 27th, Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas and Br. Dennis Tayo (Secretary and Animator of the SGME) will be in Vienna (Austria) for the meeting of the Executive Council for Missions and Evangelization (CEME). From the 27th to the 29th they will participate in Puppung (Austria) at the meeting of the Commission for New Forms in Europe.
- ☑ On the 24th March, Br. Cesare Vaiani, General Definitor, will participate in Bari (Italy) in the Pre-Chapter Day of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel (Puglia - Molise), with a speech on the theme of the Chapter "United with Christ, in fraternity, in continuity and in newness".
- ☑ From the 24th to 27th March, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General, will participate in the meeting of the Ministers of the Franciscan Transalpine Conference (COTAF) in Bonn (Germany); from the 31st March to 3rd April he will participate in the first part of the Provincial Chapter of the German Province of St. Elisabeth, which will be held in Vierzehnheiligen.
- ☑ From the 26th to 29th March, Br. Antonio Iacona, Secretary General, will participate in the meeting for the formation of the Provincial Secretaries of the Brazil and Southern Cone Conference in Córdoba, Argentina.
- ☑ From the 30th March to the 4th April, Br. Francisco will be in Rhodes (Greece) for the meeting of the Franciscan Network for Mediterranean migrants.



## Animation of the Order

### Message on the Occasion of Ramadan 1446 and Lent 2025

*OFM Commission for the service of Dialogue*



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## 2025 يني عبر ال موصل انمز و 1446 ناضمر رهش ةبسانمب ةلاسر

To our dear Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters, may the Peace of God be upon you all!

This year again, God wants us to enter together, Muslims and Christians, into “this favorable time” (2 Corinthians 6,2) where God tells us “I am near in truth” (Quran 2,186); in this time when the revelation of the Holy Quran is commemorated (Quran 2.185) and where we remember the forty days spent by Jesus in the desert, where he was tempted before beginning his public life and his preaching (Mark 1.12-13). During these weeks, we will pray, fast and give alms together, according to our traditions, under the gaze of God “who sees in secret” (Matthew 6:4), “worshiping God as if we saw Him, (knowing that) if you do not see Him, He sees you” (Sahîh of Muslim).

This year again, this holy month joins humanity in a period of unrest, violence, wars and geopolitical uncertainties, which sow fear, hatred and doubt in the hearts of many believers. No more holy truce, no perceptible light of hope for so many displaced, chased or humiliated peoples... Pope Francis, in this uncertain and painful context, decided to place the 2025 Jubilee of the Church under the sign of hope. This tradition of Jubilee Years is very old: for the Hebrew people, it gave rise, every fifty years, to the restitution of lands as well as the release of prisoners and slaves. Placing today this year under the sign of a pilgrimage of hope is to call believers to apply the balm of hope to the wounds of our suffering world.

However, our two traditions give a special place to hope. In Islam, hope (ءاجرل) is above all hope in the mercy of God: “O son of Adam! Certainly if you come to Me with the equivalent of the earth filled with sins but you meet Me without having associated anything with Me then I will meet you with as much forgiveness” (Hadîth charîf). This hope invites us to submit to God’s plan in faith. For Christians, hope is based on the victory already ac-

quired by Christ through his Resurrection (“Take courage! I have indeed overcome the world!” John 16:33). God then asks us “to take an ever more active part in the work of God” (1 Corinthians 15:58), already victorious but in the process of being accomplished and revealed. Between welcome in faith and commitment to charity, our traditions respond to and encourage each other. They stimulate each other and encourage us “to surpass one another in good deeds” (Quran 5.48).

So let us pray for each other so that we may stand firm in hope in the midst of a world in crisis. And let us receive from each other the grace of this difference in the way of understanding and living the hope which will help us to stand better before God and before humankind.

If we do so, we will be able to enter this path that Saint Francis of Assisi opened to us eight hundred years ago by proclaiming his “Canticle of the Creatures”.

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessings. To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention Your name. (...) Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned. (...) Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks, and serve Him with great humility. Amen.

The man who sings his God and the beauty of His creation is almost blind and his body is broken by fatigue and illness. He lives in a violent world in deep crisis. However, he knows how to open his eyes to the eternal plan of God, which makes of all His creatures reconciled brothers and sisters. May this grace of hope and definitive reconciliation, already palpable and perceptible in Francis, be given to us all during these holy months.

**Happy and holy Ramadan and Lent to everyone!**

*The General Commission of the Order of Friars Minor for the service of Dialogue*

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[يبرع](#)

**Invitation to the 19th Course on Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue**  
*Istanbul (Turkey), 12-25 October 2025*



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Dear Brothers and sisters, The International Franciscan Community in Türkiye invites you for the formation for Interreligious and ecumenical dialogue program. This program was initiated by the Franciscan Order 19 years ago to continue in the spirit of St. Francis and consistent efforts of Pope Francis to promote peace and harmony among nations and religions, encouraging concerted efforts to resolve the global, social and ecological problems.

The year 2025 being the Jubilee year and the commemoration of 800 years of the Canticle of creatures of St. Francis. The 19th Formation Program for interreligious and ecumenical dialogue will take place on 12th – 25th October 2025 at the Friary of Santa Maria Draperis, Istanbul, Türkiye. This is a great opportunity to reflect, discuss, and find ways to free ourselves from everything which enslaves and constrains our happiness, freedom and peace. Further to find ways by which we

make common efforts to be responsible stewards of God’s creation.

This will be done through a process in which the experts will be invited to give input and we will have an opportunity to hear people sharing their experiences and the participants themselves visiting various places to gain experiences of interreligious and ecumenical dialogue. As only a limited number of the participants can avail this opportunity, your prompt response will be highly appreciated. We would be pleased to assist you in this process of formation for dialogue. Those who are interested and wish to attend this course must contact us as soon as possible so that we can assure your participation.

Fraternally,

*Br. Eleuthere Makuta, OFM*

**Contacts:**

Br. Eleuthere Makuta, OFM:

[makutaba@yahoo.fr](mailto:makutaba@yahoo.fr)

Br. Pascal Robert, OFM:

[pascalrobert764@gmail.com](mailto:pascalrobert764@gmail.com)

Br. Felianus Dogon, OFM:

[fellyanusdogon@gmail.com](mailto:fellyanusdogon@gmail.com)

*Church of Santa Maria Draperis  
Istiklal Caddesi n. 215 - P.K. 243  
34433 Beyoğlu – Istanbul,  
TURKEY*

**Franciscan  
Bookmark**



Il Cantico di frate Sole  
nelle lingue del mondo



A cura di  
† Fr. Carlo  
Paolazzi, OFM

Prefazione di  
Fr. Francesco  
Patton, OFM  
TS Edizioni

Un solo Signore,  
una sola fede



La Passione di  
Cristo nella Ter-  
ra Santa alla luce  
di Nicea (325)

Fr. Ulise Zarza,  
OFM  
TS Edizioni



**Solemn  
Professions**

*18th January, Prov. St. Paul  
the Apostle (Colombia)*

Br. Mauricio Narváez Castillo

Information received from the  
General Secretariat

## Meeting of the International Safeguarding Commission

Rome, 5-7 March 2025



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The International Safeguarding Commission of the OFM met from 5-7 March 2025 in the Antonianum, our first time to meet there. Two of our members could not be present with us, so that there were nine of us altogether. Depending on flights, with arrivals coming from the United States, Ireland, Singapore, Zimbabwe, we gathered between Sunday and Tuesday. As always, the Commission is very fortunate to have in its membership two women, Anne Peach and Rojean Caharian, who bring their rich experience to our meetings.

We are acutely conscious that Safeguarding Minors and Vulnerable Adults is concerned more with the culture of Safeguarding which is about creating safe spaces for ministry, rather than simply preventing sexual abuse. From the perspective of the Commission, it is an expression of the Franciscan charism of respect and appreciating the shared dignity of every creature of God. Since the reality of abuse occurs in many ways besides sexual abuse, we were concerned during this meeting to address spiritual abuse and its preven-

tion. During our visit to the Penitentiary in the Lateran Basilica, the conversation widened to include the experience of abusive behaviour between confreres and in the treatment of religious women in some congregations. A highlight of our meeting was a visit to the Villa Malta where the members met with Fr Hans Zollner, SJ, who in the course of his remarks praised the commitment shown by the Friars Minor in recent years in the important area of Safeguarding.

In our evaluation of the meeting, the members were conscious of the blessing we received in the Antonianum where we witnessed fraternity lived by a large number of friars from many parts of the world and many different cultures, and we were made welcome.

We hope that they, in turn, could witness the seriousness of our commitment to help every friar to live out of a culture of Safeguarding that expresses the great gift God has granted him in his vocation to this gospel way of life.

## JPIC International Council 2025

Assisi, 1st-7th March



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“They have come from different areas of our world where the Order is present, they are here representing different cultures, different languages, different situations to dialogue about this essential element of our vocation as Friars Minor: the commitment to Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation.” These were some of the words in the inaugural message of Br. Ignacio Ceja, OFM, Vicar General, to the participants of the International Council for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) gathered in the city of Assisi from the 1st till the 7th March, 2025.

Br. Francesco Piloni, Minister Provincial of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis, in his words of welcome to the members of the ICJPIC, recalled that the Franciscan process has three important moments: **to know, to interpret and to choose**. Three verbs that summarise what was experienced and dealt with by the participants of the ICJPIC, which is composed of the JPIC coordinators of the conferences of the Order and the members of the Animation Committee. Firstly - to know - the challenges of the Franciscan conferences around the world and the current situation in each of the

continents were presented. It showed what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. Blair Matheson TSSF, Executive Director of Franciscans International, also gave an overview of the current situation in the advocacy that Franciscans International, as a Franciscan Non-Governmental Organisation, is carrying out at the United Nations.

Secondly- interpretation - the Canticle of the Creatures was proposed as a key to understanding the current context and the responses to be offered based on the Franciscan mysticism, transparent in justice, peace and care for the common home. The intervention of the Secretaries General of Formation and Studies and of Missions and Evangelisation underlined the need for collaborative work between these levels of animation.

Thirdly - to choose - the general lines of action that will guide and inspire JPIC action in the coming years were approved. These general lines of action are in the final document or Assisi 2025 Declaration, approved by all the participants. In this regard, one of them stated: 'a challenge [for us] is to develop these lines of action in our conferences. The way forward now is to encourage our brothers and sisters'



The moments of prayer, the Eucharist and the fraternal atmosphere favoured discernment which also led to the approval of a message of solidarity with the suffering people of Eastern Congo.

The International JPIC Council is made up of the animator of each of the thirteen Franciscan Conferences and the five members of the JPIC Animation Committee and "is a consultative group, constituted by the General Definitory, in order to assist the JPIC Office, the General Definitory and the Conferences in their important task of formation, awareness, animation and commitment of the Order in the field of JPIC" (Art. 1 of the JPIC Particular Statutes).

## In Thanksgiving for Br. Philippe Schillings OFM For 22 years of service in Rome



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On the 1st March, at the Fraternity of Penitentiaries "St. John Lateran" a meeting was held between the friars of the local fraternity and some friars of the General Curia to thank Br. Philippe Schillings for his 22 years of service in Rome. John Lateran. The Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, the General Definitors, Br. Albert Schmucki and Br. Jimmy Zammit, Br. Salvador Burgos León of the Translation Office, and Br. Byron A. Chamann Anlèu of the Communications Office participated in the General Curia.

Br. Albert thanked Br. Philippe for his 22 years of service in Rome, during which time he carried out various services: he served as an interpreter at five General Chapters of the Order and as a translator for the General Curia. He was also a confessor in several languages, first at St. Peter's as an extraordinary confessor and then at St. John Lateran as an ordinary confessor, where his service was greatly appreciated by the faithful. Br. Albert wished him a safe return to Brussels. Subsequently, the Vicar General intervened and, recalling how Br. Philippe knows many languages, thanked him for his service as a translator. But he emphasized that the language he speaks best is that of service and on behalf of the Minister General he gave him the medal of the Order and a parchment with his blessing.

### ***The Fraternity of the Lateran Penitentiary Friars: some historical information***

In the course of the history of the Church, the Apostolic Penitentiaries were established to absolve in the name of the "Lord Pope" from various sins

and censures those pilgrims who, especially in the Middle Ages, used to go to Rome to “do penance”. The first historical indication in this regard, however, appears only in 1215 in the documents of the Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council. Even the sons of the Seraphic Father St. Francis, from the dawn of the Order, were co-opted amongst “these coadjutor penitentiaries” and therefore charged by the Apostolic See to attend to the ministry of confessions both in the Patriarchal (Papale) Basilicas and wherever the Papal Curia established its see. Not infrequently, indeed, we also meet them as family members and papal chaplains.

At the time, however, and until 1568, the practice in force at the Apostolic See was to choose the Apostolic Penitentiaries above all from among the religious of the various Mendicant Orders, such as, for example, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Servites, the Hermits of St. Augustine and the Carmelites. However, in 1568-69 St. Pius V, in his vast liturgical reform, also reformed the Apostolic Penitentiary. And he did so by specifying the tasks of the Major Penitentiary and the Minor Penitentiaries, arranging the offices differently, establishing their powers and finally reducing the services of the Minor Penitentiaries to only three Basilicas in Rome (Rome). These are: St. Mary Major, which he entrusted to the Dominicans, St. Peter’s in the

Vatican, which he entrusted to the Jesuits, and St. John Lateran, which he entrusted to the Friars Minor. From that date until today, the office of the Lateran Penitentiaries underwent several further changes and the Friars Minor continued to exercise, without any interruption, the noble Ministry of Minor Penitentiaries in the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran: “Omnium Urbis et Orbis ecclesiarum Caput et Mater”. The Franciscan Fraternity of the Lateran Penitentiary Friars, which officially calls itself the “Apostolic College of the Lateran Penitentiary Fathers”, because of the specific mission it is called to carry out, namely that of dedicating itself totally to the ministry of Penance-Reconciliation in the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, can be defined as an international Franciscan Fraternity “sui generis”.

As a Fraternity of Friars Minor, in its constitution, organization and community life it depends directly on the Minister General. However, in everything that concerns the pastoral ministry to be carried out, it depends solely on His Eminence Cardinal Penitentiary Major, to whom he must always refer in every particular case. Currently, the eight Lateran Penitentiaries of various nationalities and different languages for the reception of penitents, are Ordinary Minor Penitentiaries and reside in a House assigned to them by the Holy See above the Cosmatesque cloister of the Basilica.



OFS

## OFS, National Elective Chapter of Denmark

*Maribo, 7-9 March 2025*



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From the 7th- 9th March 2025, in Maribo at the convent of the Sisters of St. Briget (Habitaculum Mariae, Sankt Birgitta Kloster), the national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Denmark celebrated its National Chapter.

It is a very small fraternity that has only 20 members belonging to three local fraternities located in Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg. Despite the small number, the fraternity is very active, determined, joyful, tenacious and committed both in the local Church and in the Order. The CIOFS delegation, consisting of Mary Stronach, Deputy Minister General, and Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM, member of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, arrived in Copenhagen on the 6th March and was

hosted at the friary of St. Francis of Assisi, which is located at number 4 Stenographe.

The visit to the national fraternity began on the 7th March with the celebration of Mass presided over by His Excellency, Czeslaw Kozon, Bishop of Copenhagen, also responsible for Greenland and the Faroe Islands. At the end of the celebration, the visitors had a meeting with Mons. Czeslaw during which they discussed various topics including that of the service of the OFS in the local Church and in the Diocese. The meeting was very cordial and open and concluded with lunch. After greetings and thanking the Bishop for his hospitality, the delegation, accompanied by the national spiritual assistant Br. Stephen Maria Bejo, OFMConv. and by



two members of the OFS went by train, a journey of about two hours, to the city of Maribo, whereat the Elective Chapter was celebrated. The Chapter opened with the celebration of Mass presided by the national spiritual assistant Br. Stephen, OFM-Conv, concelebrating with Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM. During the celebration, the Chapter members re-

newed their profession. On Saturday, the day of the Chapter, the members began with the celebration of Mass, offered by Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM, who in his homily reflected on the profound meaning of the Christian call that gives meaning to the call to the OFS. The work then continued with the financial report, approved unanimously, and with a debate that addressed the challenges for future OFS fraternities in Denmark and, more generally, in the Scandinavian countries. Everyone agreed in emphasizing the need to give priority above all to formation and to strengthening the relationship with the Bishop and the Diocese. On Saturday afternoon, the vote for the election of the new National Council took place, which reconfirmed both Hellen Zielke Nielsen as National Minister and Catherine Moniel as International Councilor.

## News from the Entities



### Philippines, Provincial Parish Pastoral Assembly Charts New Path for Synodal Mission

*Province of San Antonio de Padua*



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The Province of San Antonio de Padua – Philippines held the latest phase of its Provincial Parish Pastoral Assembly from February 18-20 at the Inter-Franciscan Spirituality Center, Bag-ong Tudela, Josefina, Zamboanga del Sur. This gathering brought together friars in parish ministry and lay collaborators to deepen their commitment to synodality, fraternity, and responsible stewardship in parish pastoral work.

Building on previous phases, this assembly provided a space for reflection and concrete planning, focusing on the evolving challenges and opportunities in parish ministry. The event opened with a talk by Br. Elton Viagedor, OFM, on Synodal Mission: Synodality and Its Implication to Parish Pastoral Ministry. He underscored the Church's call to jour-

ney together, fostering a culture of listening, shared responsibility, and co-responsibility in mission. On the second day, Br. Jovito Malinao, OFM, presented the OFM document "Sent to Evangelize in Fraternity and Minority in the Parish", highlighting the Franciscan call to serve with humility, simplicity, and fraternity. This was followed by a session with Minister Provincial Br. Renee C. Dean, OFM, on Financial Transparency and Stewardship of Resources, stressing the need for accountability and the responsible management of parish funds and resources. Participants then engaged in a workshop, exploring practical ways to integrate these principles into their respective parishes. The assembly concluded with the presentation of a final statement, outlining a roadmap for the future of Franciscan parish ministry. This document will guide efforts to ensure that Franciscan parishes continue fostering synodality, collaboration, and responsible leadership. This phase of the Provincial Parish Pastoral Assembly marks a significant step in strengthening the Franciscan approach to parish ministry, reaffirming a commitment to a Church that listens, serves, and walks together in faith.

*Br. Mark Joy G. Basallajes, OFM*

## Radio Frei Galvão is born, a new stage for Franciscan communication

*Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil*



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In the year in which it celebrates 350 years of history, the Franciscan Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil, through the Frei Rogério Foundation, took another step in the communication of the OFM in the country on the 8th March with the inauguration of Rádio Frei Galvão in Guaratinguetá (SP).

The ceremony was attended by ecclesiastical authorities, including Cardinal Jaime Spengler, OFM, president of the CNBB (Na-



tional Conference of Bishops of Brazil), Msgr. Orlando Brandes, Archbishop of Aparecida, Br. Paulo Roberto Pereira, Minister Provincial, as well as the inhabitants of the city and the region.

This moment marked a new stage in the Franciscan evangelizing mission, strengthening the relationship with the local community and with the Paraíba Valley, a region of the State of São Paulo where the new station is based, through an important means of communication whose main characteristic is proximity to the listener.

Read the article on [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org) Br. Augusto Luiz Gabriel and Adriana Rabelo

## Integration Program for Postulants in the Philippines

*Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Myanmar also involved*



WWW.OFM.ORG



From February 17th to 22nd, 2025, at the San Damiano Integration House in Baguio City (Philippines), the postulants of the Philippine Provinces of San Pedro Bautista and St. Anthony of Padua, and those of the Custody of St. Anthony (Singapore-Malaysia-Brunei) and the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation (Myanmar), were involved in a joint Psycho-Spiritual Integration Program for postulants.

The program, promoted by Br. Chris Tibong, OFM (S. Pedro Bautista), aims to strengthen the bond between the postulants of the Entities involved, promote personal bonds between the participants and focus on the understanding of the human person through the Human, Christian and Franciscan dimensions.

In the human dimension, participants had the opportunity to revisit their inner childhood, focusing on their wounds and how they cope with past experiences. The goal was to support their journey towards inner healing and liberation.

A deep sense of prayer and devotion rooted in Franciscan spirituality was observed throughout the program. As our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi said, “do not extinguish the spirit of prayer” was an integral part of the program. The Franciscan dimension focused on the themes of fraternity and minority. The program reminded participants that the foundation of our vocation to fraternal life lies in opening ourselves to others, accepting ourselves, and engaging in dialogue with both ourselves and others.

It was this spirit of brotherhood that inspired the creation of a joint program, allowing participants to grow in the life of fraternity. The meeting was made possible through the collaboration between the Philippine Provinces, the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Myanmar, and the Custody of St. Anthony of Padua in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

This program is a constant invitation to integrate the lessons into daily life, as participants embrace the Franciscan way of living.

## Deceased Brothers



- † 6th March: Br. Louis Coeffic, Prov. Blessed John Duns Scotus (France)
- † 5th March: Br. Celestin Čakarić, Prov. Saints Cyril and Methodius (Croatia)
- † 4th March: Br. Andrzej Kałamarz, Prov. Immaculate Conception (Poland)
- † 3rd March: Br. Bonfiglio Sassi, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)
- † 25th February: Br. Eulogio Roselada, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)
- † 23rd February: Br. Giovanbattista Mancarella, Prov. Our Lady of the Assumption (Italy)

- † 19th February: Br. Jean-Paul Lainesse, Prov. Holy Spirit (Canada)
- † 5th February: Br. Waldo Hoogenboom, The Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands)
- † 22nd January: Br. Eugenio Caputi, Prov. Our Lady of the Assumption (Italy)
- † 16th December: Br. Patrick Brady, Province of Ireland
- † 14th November: Br. João Dias, Prov. The Martyrs of Morocco (Portugal)

Information received from the General Secretariat [secgen@ofm.org](mailto:secgen@ofm.org)

## Pro Monialibus



## Meeting of the International Commission for the Revision of the General Constitutions of the Order of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare

*Order of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare at the OFM General Curia*



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From the 22nd February till the 2nd March, 2025, the International Commission working on the revision of the General Constitutions of the Order of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare met in the General Curia of the Friars Minor, holding its eleventh working meeting in this second face-to-face meeting.

The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, launched this process in September 2021. Since then, the Sisters and friars of the Commission have worked with generosity and commitment in this service to the Order, taking into account what the Church asks today of the Female Contemplative Life and the diversity with which the Form of Life

of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare is embodied in the different social and cultural contexts of the world. The friars of the Order, especially Br. Ignacio Ceja, Vicar General, and the Delegate *pro Monialibus*, Br. Fábio Cesar Gomes, gave us a great fraternal welcome as if we were “*Sister Clare herself*”, who has fostered a magnificent working climate and an effective use of time.

The Commission is organised into four language groups. Despite the different languages, the efficiency of Br. Pasquale Berardinetti (Director of the Automation Office), the help of the interpreters and the pleasant fraternal atmosphere that has been created amongst us, have made possible a good communication that has helped us to advance in our purpose of working in depth on our Constitutions, already immersed in the third phase of the project. After more than three years of laborious work, carried out in a synodal spirit through two moments of consultation with all the Communities of the world, the Commission met on this occasion to evaluate the first complete draft of the text of the Constitutions.

A beautiful event during our stay in Rome was the pilgrimage to St Peter’s Basilica in the Jubilee of

Hope, on the morning of Friday 28 February. Carrying the Jubilee Cross, we walk along the Way of Conciliation, praying with songs of joy and praise, until we reach the tomb of the Apostle Peter, passing through the Holy Door of Hope. When we returned to the Curia, the Lord gave us the presence of the Minister General, with whom the Commission had a meeting the following day, in which the progress of the work was shared. Br. Massimo positively valued the text prepared by the Commission, underlining its charismatic and normative soundness, and reflecting on some concrete aspects. He concluded the meeting by urging, once again, that this important text of the Order encourage, favour and sustain, above all, the holy unity of the Poor

Sisters of St. Clare. We concluded the morning with celebration of the Eucharist with the Minister General. The Sisters and friars of the Commission were pleased to have met during these days to work on this important stage of the project, and to have shared with the Fraternity of the Curia the Eucharist and the morning prayer each day, the meals and the moments of meeting in the refectory. We thank God for all that we have experienced, and we thank the friars for their prayers and the fraternal warmth of their welcome.

*Sr. Maria Antonia Crespo, CSO*

*Secretary of the Commission*



## Holy See

### Br. Victor Luis Quematcha, OFM appointed Bishop Diocese of Bafatá in Guinea Bissau



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The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has appointed our brother Victor Luis Quematcha, OFM, a member of our Custody of Saint Francis of Assisi in Guinea-Bissau (dependent on the Province of Saint Anthony of Padua of the Friars Minor in Italy) and currently General Definitor for the

African Conferences, as Bishop of the Diocese of Bafatá in Guinea-Bissau. Br. Victor was born on April 27, 1967, in Cumura (Prabis), Guinea-Bissau. He received the Franciscan habit on September 17, 1990, and pursued his philosophical studies at the Don Bosco Higher Institute in Togo and his theological studies at the Major Seminary of Anyama in Côte d'Ivoire. He made his Solemn Profession on August 30, 1997, and was ordained a priest on May 2, 1998. He obtained a licentiate in Moral Theology from the Pontifical Alphonsian Academy in Rome. During his ministry, he has held various positions within the Custody and our Order, including

General Definitor, Custos, Vicar of the Custody, Councillor and Secretary of the former Venetian Foundation in Guinea-Bissau, Novice Master, Master of Temporary Professed Friars, Parish Priest, Teacher of Moral Theology at the "Dom Settimio Arturo Ferrazzetta" Interdiocesan Major Seminary of Bissau, and Teacher of Christian Anthropology at the Catholic University of Bissau. We express our deepest gratitude to our brother, His Excellency, Most Reverend Mons. Victor Luis Quematcha, for his service and fraternal closeness, wishing him a fruitful episcopal ministry in the spirit of fraternity and minority of Saint Francis and the Order.

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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. Cyrianus Korongu, Br. Arthur Andersen, Br. Rick Martignetti

# OFM

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