

International Bulletin

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The international Chapter of Mats

Assisi, 2nd -8th June 2025

From the 2nd to 8th June 2025, the International Chapter of Mats of the Order of Friars Minor will be held in Assisi.

The path that led to this appointment starts from the last General Chapter, celebrated in Rome in 2021, which in mandate no. 4 indicated to involve the Ministers, the Custodes and their respective councils to promote authentic fraternal life and to listen to each person, especially young people, at several levels.

Subsequently, the Minister General and his Definitory considered it enriching to undertake a synodal journey involving the friars of the first Order, but also the sisters and brothers of the second and third



Orders, religious and laity, in order to succeed in prophetically renewing the identity of Friars Minor.

«We wanted an experience,» says Fr. Cesare Viani, Definitor General, «in which the friars and other people could meet on an equal footing, with the same rights and duties, in a fraternal exchange on the essential issues of our lives. This is why we drew on our tradition the image of the Chapter of Mats, which allowed us to do what we wanted».

The Definitory then decided to «connect» it to the Plenary Council of the Order (PCO), deciding that «the members of the PCO were all friars who had participated in the Council of Mats and who could express its spirit in that juridical structure that is the PCO, which can propose

topics to be discussed at the General Chapter», explains Fr. Cesare.

The Entities of the Order were therefore asked to celebrate first of all at the local level their own Chapter of Mats, always with the modality of listening to lay men and women religious, proposing to turn attention to three fundamental nuclei: Charism, Communion and Mission. The next step was to summarize the results of the local Chapters at the level of Conferences, which in turn sent their contributions to the General Curia. From those texts, an Instrumentum Laboris was drawn up that will provide material for discussion and comparison to the International Chapter of Assisi, which will be attended by 150 friars, Franciscan religious, lay men and women from all the Conferences of the Order.



Government of the Order

Pentecost 2025 Letter from Minister General



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Letter

from the Minister General for
PENTECOST 2025



To all Friars Minor of the Order
To the Poor Clare and Conceptionist Sisters
To the Franciscan Sisters affiliated with the Order
To Franciscan lay men and women



Dear Brothers and Sister

May the Lord give you His peace!

We prepare to celebrate Pentecost, a day so dear to Saint Francis who saw in the Holy Spirit the true Minister General of the

Order. On this day we entrust ourselves once again to the «Lord who gives life» and invoke with faith his holy operation (Rule 10,8) upon us and upon all humanity: Praised be You, my Lord, for those who forgive for Your love!

Read the full text of the Letter:

[Italiano](#) - [English](#) - [Español](#) - [Deutsch](#) - [Français](#) - [Hrvatski](#)
[Polski](#) - [Português](#)

General Curia Agenda



- ☑ Up until the 12th June, the General Definitory and the Officials of the Curia will be in Assisi for the International Chapter of Mats and the Plenary Council of the Order.
- ☑ On the 13th June, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will celebrate the Feast of St. Anthony at the Antonianum in Rome and then in Lanciano. On the 14th he will participate in the General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in Rome. From the 15th to the 19th he will be in Madagascar to visit the Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM.
- ☑ From the 13th-21st June, Br. Joaquín A. Echeverry Hincapié, Definitor General, will visit the Province of St Philip of Jesus in Mexico as General Delegate. From the 26th June to the 1st July he will be in Guinea Bissau for the episcopal ordination of the former Definitor General, Br. Victor Quematcha.
- ☑ From 15th to the 9th August, Br. Dennis Tayo, General Animator for the Missions, will participate in the Inter-Vocational Missionary Course for Africa, which will be held in Kampala (Uganda) at the shrine of Monyoyo.
- ☑ From the 16th to 18th June, Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas, Secretary General for the Missions and Evangelization, will participate in the meeting of the Parish Commission in the Curia.
- ☑ On the 18th June, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General, will participate in a zoom meeting of the Commission for Protection.

Meeting with the new Ministers and Custodes General Curia, 12th – 20th May 2025



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From the 12th to 20th May in the General Curia, the Minister General and his Definitory met the new Ministers and Custodes of the Order. This is the usual formation meeting that the General Government and the Officials of the Curia offer every year to the newly elected friars at the head of their Entity, to better prepare them for the service for which they have been chosen.

On Monday, the 12th May, after the recitation of Lauds and the presentation of the structure of the Curia by the Communications Office, the moderators of the session (Definitors Br. John Wong and Br. Konrad Cholewa) presented the program of the meeting. The participants then worked in small groups to share the joys, hopes, challenges and expectations of the Entities represented, which were subsequently shared in the plenary.

In the afternoon, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli moderated the session by presenting his speech: “The service of authority in the synodal journey of the people of God: a look of hope towards the future”. As the title suggests, Br. Massimo took his cue from the recent Synod on synodality experienced by the Church which, in his opinion, “offers new perspectives for understanding

and living our ministry at the service of the People of God and our fraternity.” Also from the writings of St Francis and St Clare emerges a clear and articulated conception of the authority of the Ministers and Custodes, which is based on some fundamental principles: authority as a service, the duties and limits of the Ministers, mutual obedience, the qual-



ities to carry out such a service, the relationship with the friars, the spiritual dimension of authority and also some very practical aspects, such as the

management of material goods according to poverty and transparency.

The Minister General focused on hope as an “essential dimension of ministry”, and then moved on to more concrete issues, including the conversion of structures, formation, care for relationships, projects and visions aimed at the future, a new Franciscan evangelization. In conclusion, Br. Massimo recalled that “we are called above all to be ministers of hope, capable of looking beyond the difficulties of the present to see the signs of the Kingdom that is already sprouting among us. Just as Francis was able to see beyond the ruins of San Damiano a renewed Church, so we are called to see in the fragility of our time the signs of a new future that God is preparing.”

The day ended with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, Vicar General.



On Tuesday the 13th May, the new Ministers and Custodes discussed the theme of the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults with the Brothers of the General Procuratorate (Br. Claudio Durighetto and Br. Chryzostom Fryc) and with Br. Albert Schmucki (Definitor General and former Director of the Office of Protection), Br. Iurii Semko and Br. Joe Condren (respectively current Director and Secretary of the Office). The evening Mass was presided over by Br. Bonaventura Lin.

The following day, in the morning, some participants had private talks with the Minister General. In the afternoon, the new Ministers and Custodes visited the Delegation of the Holy Land in Rome, welcomed by Br. Joseph Kamwashi Samba. During the meeting, the historical importance of the Custody and the role of the Commissaries of the Holy Land were discussed; In addition, the Ministers

were invited to promote the annual Collection for the Holy Land, which helps to maintain the Church's presence in the Holy Places and to provide support to Christians. Later, they went to the Pontifical University *Antoniana* (PUA), welcomed by Br. Agustín Hernández Vidales, Rector Magnificent, who presented them with the educational offer of the four faculties. Br. Agustín pointed out that several specialized courses of the PUA are not present in other Pontifical Universities in Rome, highlighting in particular those on AI- Artificial Intelligence.

The day concluded with the recitation of Vespers and a fraternal dinner with the friars of the Fraternity of the International College of St. Anthony (CISA). The meeting continued on the 15th May with Br. Claudio Durighetto and Br. Chryzostom Fryc, respectively Procurator General and Deputy, who illustrated the Legislation and the Provincial Government, the Definitorio as a council and the Canonical Procedures for the Friars in difficulty. The theme absorbed the whole morning with group work on the challenges experienced by the Entities and the plenary for the presentation of the works and any questions.

In the afternoon, the new Ministers and Custodes visited some Offices of the General Curia: Br. Pedro Zitha illustrated his work as Assistant General of the OFS; the JPIC office was presented by Br. Daniel N. Rodriguez Blanco and Br. Taucen Girsang, respectively Director and Deputy; the Director Br. Chryzostom Fryc welcomed the brothers into the Historical Archive.

On the 16th May, Br. Cesare Vaiani presented the theme of the Franciscan Centenarians, the Chapter of Mats and the Plenary Council of the Order: these are events, explained the Definitor General, that involve the whole Order, at the territorial and general level, with a view to dialogue, confrontation and renewal of the charism and mission. Subsequently, the OFM Fraternitas Foundation was presented by Br. Franco Mirri and Br. Nikola Koziina (of the Foundation) and Br. Baptist D'Souza (Delegate of the Secretary General for relations with the Foundation).

In the afternoon, the visits to the Offices continued: Br. Gianni Califano (Postulator General) explained the Postulation and the process for the causes of saints, while Br. Francisco Gomez Vargas (Secretary for Evangelization) and Br. Dennis Tayo (Animator for the Missions) spoke about the General Secretariat for the Missions and Evangelization.

The next day the friars made a pilgrimage to Assisi, led by the Definitor General Fr. César Kùlkamp. They visited the library of the Sacred Convent and the Basilica of St. Francis and then went to the friary and Church of San Damiano, where they celebrated the Eucharist presided over by Br. Francesco Piloni, Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Francis of Assisi. In the afternoon they visited the Portiuncula, where the Custos Br. Massimo Travascio showed the friars the restoration work that had just been completed.

Sunday, the 18th May marked the beginning of the Petrine ministry of Leo XIV and some guests participated in the liturgy in St. Peter's Square.

The meeting continued on the 19th May with the report of Br. Saulo Duarte and Br. José Dimas Granados Ramos on «The Minister between listening to the brothers and personal solitude» addressing it through the theme of «Leaders and Leadership», which was followed by work in language groups on the challenges and approaches for the accompaniment of friars in difficulty in the Entities and in the Conferences. In the afternoon, the two speakers continued the session on the issue of managing situations of internal conflict.

The meeting continued on the 19th May with the report of Br. Saulo Duarte and Br. José Dimas Granados Ramos on the theme «The Minister between listening to the brothers and personal solitude» addressing it through the themes of Leader and Leadership and communication, which was followed by work in language groups on the challenges and approaches for the accompaniment of

friars in difficulty in the Entities and in the Conferences. In the afternoon, the two speakers continued the session on the issue of managing situations of internal conflict.

On the last day of the meeting, Br. Joel Sulse (General Treasurer) and Br. Saulo Duarte (Deputy General Treasurer) dealt with the theme of «Economy in the Life and Mission of the Entity»; afterwards, the participants were able to ask their questions to the General Treasurer. In the second part of the morning, Br. Darko Tepert and Br. Hieronimus Dei Rupa (Secretary General of Formation and Studies and Vice-President) presented the report entitled «The Minister's service to form through the report and the report», which was followed by a debate with the speakers. In the afternoon, the Secretary General, Br. Antonio Iacona, presented the new Manual of the Provincial Secretary, while Br. Pasquale Berardinetti (Director of the Protocol and Automation offices) illustrated Schematismus and Directiones Domorum.

After the Plenary Assembly of sharing and verification of all the work done in the previous days, the Eucharistic celebration on the feast of St. Bernardine of Siena was presided over by the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, who in his homily recalled the centrality of the Name of Jesus in the preaching of St. Bernardine who taught that salvation comes only from Jesus. He also emphasized the importance of the synodal spirit and mutual listening, highlighting how this approach is rooted in the Franciscan tradition concluded this meeting of dialogue, formation, sharing and fraternity. Good service to all!





Reflections by Br. Massimo

May 2025



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As we continue our journey as “pilgrims of hope” in this jubilee year, I retrace some steps in the encounters lived in this time.

My visit to Zadar in Croatia after Easter represented a significant moment of this journey. The ancient Province of St. Jerome, now a dependent custody, is opening up with both trepidation and courage to a new future. I was able to feel how the brothers, even in the humility of numbers and resources, are experiencing this passage not as a defeat, but as an opportunity to rediscover the essentials of our charisma. Their testimony reminds us that being “minor” also means knowing how to welcome changes with confidence, recognizing in them not as an obstacle, but a possibility of renewal. I lived the same with the Friars Minor of Northern Italy on a day in Verona, where we asked ourselves what burdens to lay down for a more evangelical journey in this time.

Immediately after, the extraordinary meeting with almost a thousand young people in Taormina (Italy). I invited them to live in hope, to look to the future with their feet well planted in the re-



ality of their land, with all its riches and challenges. I saw in their eyes the ability to dream without escaping from reality, to imagine a different tomorrow without forgetting the roots. In a territory like Sicily, marked by contradictions but also by enormous potential, these young people represent a concrete sign of that hope that does not disappoint.

During the international meeting of the lay brothers of the Order at the Porziuncola we all breathed together the beauty of the Franciscan vocation that goes beyond the simple distinction between lay friars and priests to embrace a model of differentiated unity. The lay friars and the ordained friars share the same mission, that of evangelizing with the word, with works, with actions and with the simple presence. At a time when differences often risk becoming divisions, we have rediscovered how it is possible

to articulate unity and diversity between us.

In the May meetings with the General Definitorium and with the new ministers and custodians I tried to recognize the red thread of hope even in those difficult situations that I was able to listen to, both personal and fraternal. I have seen that even in contexts of crisis and abandonment, such as in transition and change, it is possible not to give up hope, but always on condition that we remain together, united.

The election of the “Lord Pope” Leo XIV made us breathe the faithful presence of the risen Lord in the midst of his people with the announcement of peace and hope, in the continuity of faith.

In these passages I once again perceived the wealth of our family in the greater path of the Church. A wealth that is not in works or structures, but in the ability to walk together as pilgrims, supporting each other in difficulties and sharing joys, looking deeply at our time, without fear and not forgetting the horizon of the Kingdom of God that opens us to the future.

Translation of the body of St. Dominic



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On Saturday, May 24, in a gesture that reflects the fraternity among the Mendicant Orders, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, presided over the Eucharist in the Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill, Rome, to commemorate the translation of the

body of St. Dominic de Guzmán. At the end of the Eucharist, Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., Master of the Dominican Order, expressed his gratitude by emphasizing the enduring friendship between Friars Minor and Dominicans.





Franciscan Centenaries

Franciscan Festival for the 800th Anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures



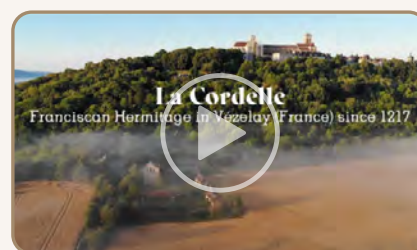
The 'Brother Sun' festival, organised by the OFM Province of Blessed Duns Scotus (France-Belgium) in collaboration with Église Verte and the Laudato Si' Movement, will be held from 28 to 31 August 2025 in Notre-Dame de Reinacker (France). The festival will offer teachings, testimonies, spiritual moments, artistic and creative contemplation workshops, and concerts. 250 visitors, both believers and non-believers, are expected to attend.

For more information :

<https://franciscains.fr/brothersun/>

The hermitage of La Cordelle

Have you ever wondered what a Franciscan hermitage was like in the thirteenth century? What if we told you that the hermitage of La Cordelle, on the hill of Vézelay, in Burgundy (France) is still inhabited by Franciscan friars?



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Chapters

Chapter of the Province of St. Francis of Assisi in Poland Gostyń, 19-23 may 2025



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From May 19 to 23, 2025, the Provincial Chapter of the **Province of St. Francis of Assisi in Poland** was held at the Holy Mountain in Gostyń under the motto: "*Laudato si'. Praise and bless my Lord, give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.*"

Thirty-four capitular friars participated, led by the Minister Provincial Br. Leonard Bielecki and the Provincial Vicar Br. Franciszek Chodkowski.

The Chapter began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Holy Mountain Basilica, presided over by H.E. Bishop Damian Muskus OFM. In his homily, he particularly emphasized the gift of love, which cannot be offered to anyone unless one first possesses it within oneself.

During the proceedings, many important topics were raised, with the most significant being **the election of a new government**, which took place on the second day. The following brothers were appointed Provincial Definitors: Br. Joel Kokott, Br. Faustyn Sławiński, Br. Hieronim Stypa, Br. Kor-

dian Szwarc, and Br. Justyn Berus. Other issues included amendments to the provincial Particular Statutes, matters related to vocations ministry, the Secretariat of Formation and Studies, *Ad Gentes* missions, and the agenda of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. There was also discussion on improved pastoral service to the Secular Franciscan Order and the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Kalwaria Pakoska. Topics on retreats, popular missions, and youth ministry were also covered. All these topics were discussed in group work sessions. Guest speakers included Br. Grzegorz Strzelczyk, a presbyter of the Archdiocese of Katowice and theologian at the University of Silesia, and Ms. Agnieszka Iwulska, President of the

Catholic foundation “*Wind Rose*”. Their presentations addressed synodality in the Catholic Church and the expectations of the laity towards Franciscans and clergy in general.

The Chapter concluded with a solemn Mass celebrated in the Holy Mountain Basilica, presided over by the Minister Provincial.

Text: Kacper Gryś OFM

Photo: Fabian Witkowski OFM

[Przeczytaj oryginalny artykuł w języku polskim](#)

Chapter of the Province “The Holy Martyrs of Gorcum” (Low Countries)

Br. Theo van Adrichem re-elected Minister Provincial



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The Province of the Holy Martyrs of Gorcum in the Low Countries (the Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium) held the provincial Chapter from 19 to 22 May under the leadership of General Visitor Br. Andreas Brands OFM, member of the German Province of St. Elizabeth.

René Dinklo O.P. acted as moderator, which was a beautiful fraternal service of the Dominican Order to our Order. The Chapter has re-elected Br. Theo van Adrichem OFM (70) for a period of three years as Minister Provincial. With him, Br. Jan ter Maat OFM (46) as Vicar Provincial, Br. Fer van der Reijken OFM (64) and Br. Hans-Peter Bartels OFM (37) as Definitors will form the Definitorium for the next three years.

The Chapter further considered the policy for the coming three years of the Province. On the second day, there were also guests present, in addition to three young brothers (including our two juniors)

and our care coordinator; these were guests from the broad Franciscan Family in the Netherlands and Flanders: a Capuchin Friar Minor, a Conventual Friar Minor, two Poor Clares Sisters, the National Minister of the OFS Netherlands, the staff member of TAU - Flanders and the director of the Franciscan Movement Netherlands. An important topic will be, among other things, the long-term future of the Franciscan Friars Minor in Northwestern and Central Europe in general and Flanders and the Netherlands in particular. The Province projects TAU - Franciscan Spirituality Today, Franciscan Youth Work and the commitment to external communication will be continued.

In the past six years that Br. Theo van Adrichem led the Province, the merger between the Dutch and Flemish brothers was central. In the coming three years, new forms of collaboration with the Franciscan Friars Minor in our region, Germany in particular, will be central.



News from the Entities

Visit of the Novices to the General Curia

The friars of the Novitiates of San Damiano and La Verna in Rome



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On Tuesday, the 27th May 2025, the Minister General, fr. Massimo Fusarelli, and the Definitor General, Br. Cesare Vaiani, met in the General Curia with the 21 Novices of two Novitiates present in Italy: those of San Damiano and La Verna.

Accompanied by fr. Simone Ceccobao, Master of Novices at San Damiano, and fr. Francesco Bartoli and fr. Raffaele Messa, vice Masters at La Verna, the young friars were welcomed in a fraternal meeting by fr. Massimo and fr. Cesare, with whom they spoke about the traits of the charism of the Friars Minor in dialogue with the challenge of interculturality. Afterwards, before the celebration of the Eucharist, fr. Cesare acted as their guide in the church of Santa Maria Mediatrix, dwelling on the large and small works present there: from the spacious mosaics that tell the history of the Order, to the sculptures of the Via Crucis, the work of a young Giacomo Manzù. After the celebration and a moment of conviviality with the friars of the General Curia, the Novices continued their Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome, which in these days will take them through the 4 Holy Doors of the City in the

footsteps of the «Pilgrimage of the 7 Churches» of St. Philip Neri. The two Novitiates bring together young friars from different Provinces, not only Italian: in San Damiano there are currently the novices of the Provinces of St. Francis of Assisi (Umbria-Sardinia), St. James of the Marca (Marche), Immaculate Conception (Salerno-Lucania), Assumption of the BVM (Salento) and Immaculate Conception (New York, USA). In La Verna, on the other hand, the novices of the Province of St. Bonaventure (Lazio-Abruzzo), the Custody of the Holy Land and the Custody of Albania are present.



Indonesia, Interfaith Youth Dialogue

Listen and Respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor



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In the spirit of unity and shared commitment, around 450 young people from diverse religious backgrounds gathered in Jakarta on Saturday, 24 May 2025, for an “Interfaith Youth Dialogue.” The event, hosted by the Franciscan Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, aimed to “Listen and Respond to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor,” commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures and the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si’.

Held at the Vitra Ballroom in Kramat, the dialogue brought together students from various universities in Jakarta, representing Islam, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism. Br. Mikael Peruhe OFM, the Minister Provincial, opened the event by urging the

young attendees to seize this opportunity to align their will and spirit. He challenged them to bravely confront the world’s pressing issues, particularly in Indonesia. “Young people are expected to take a stand against deforestation bravely, those marginalized and impoverished by environmental degradation, and the uncontrolled plunder of natural resources,” he emphasized.

Throughout the dialogue, participants fostered a strong sense of fraternity, sharing personal experiences and their faith perspectives on the universe, humanity’s role, and how individuals should interact with the cosmos. An important insight gained from this encounter is that a culture of encounter - through communication, dialogue, and collaboration - between religions can form

a unified and powerful force to address global challenges. This collective power will empower young people to manifest a lifestyle rooted in the spirit of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

The “cry of the earth,” encompassing issues like environmental degradation, water, and air pollution, and the “cry of the poor,” including hunger, limited employment opportunities, inequality, injustice, and discrimination, were critical problems demanding collaborative solutions. The young participants firmly believe that interfaith youth are agents of change and play a vital role in safeguarding the earth as our common home, ensuring the realization of cosmic fraternity with God, fellow human beings, and the environment.

In addition to insightful discussions, the event also featured performances showcasing the participating campuses’ cultural and religious backgrounds.

The Interfaith Youth Dialogue culminated in adopting a joint declaration for a sustainable future:

First, Addressing Global Crises: Recognizing environmental and humanitarian crises as global issues, participants committed to working hand-in-hand and sustainably to ensure a healthy environment and uphold human dignity.

Second, Promoting Awareness: A pledge was made to continuously promote the importance of environmental care and respect for human dignity within society and through social media.

Third, Active Engagement: The youth is committed to actively participating in and contributing

to various activities related to environmental and humanitarian crises. **Fourth, Academic Contribution:** They resolved to conduct and publish academic studies on the phenomena of ecological and humanitarian crises.



Fifth, Policy Evaluation: Participants pledged to provide input and evaluate public policymakers (government) when their policies and actions negatively impact the environment and human dignity.

Sixth, Leading by Example: The youth commit to being “salt and light” in their families, campuses, religious communities, and society by showing example through a way of life that respects the environment and human dignity.

Br. Jimmy Hend. Rance Tnomat, OFM

Provincial Secretary of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel, Indonesia

The pilgrims of hope: from Russia to Italy On Pilgrimage with Fr. Kanizy Kąkol



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From 26th April to May 6th 2025, a small group of “pilgrims of hope” coming from Russia arrived in Italy. The pilgrimage as expressed through the Jubilee got its inspiration from the witness of life of the Blessed Carlo Acutis. It was an exceptional time, full of grace but also spiritual and physical challenges.

The pilgrimage was organized by Fr. Fr. Kanizy Kąkol OFM, who carries out his pastoral activities in the Parish of the Immaculate Conception

of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Smolensk. Few days before the beginning of our pilgrimage, the Lord called to Himself Pope Francis unexpectedly, and as the result the canonization of Carlo Acutis which was to take place on 27th April was postponed. The program of our pilgrimage too was disrupted!

On the first day, we participated at the Holy Mass at St. Peter’s square which was presided by Cardinal Parolin. It was celebrated for the soul of the

Holy Father. Entering into the spirit of suffering, mourning and prayer, it made us live in a close relationship and strong experience with the Church.

The following day was exceptional. It was marked by the passing through the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. Peter. Together with other pilgrims, carrying the cross, singing the hymns, praying, we praised God and presented to Him our supplications: In particular we prayed for the Church in Russia, our communities, families and parishes. On the same day we visited the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where Pope Francis rests now. We paid homage to him and prayed at his tomb.

Our spiritual journey on the following days was spent on important places of the Eucharistic miracle: Orvieto and Bolsena, the city where the solemnity of Corpus Crist originated. We visited Siena, the city of St. Catherine of Siena, San Gimignano of Assisi, the town in Assisi which has the origins of Franciscan spirituality. Following the footsteps of St. Francis, we went to important places of his life and where Franciscan spirituality flourished. First of all, we visited the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, in the chapel of tears which is beside the Portiuncula. We had the grace of celebrating the Eucharist there. We walked towards the city and rested at St. Damiano. Later we visited the Basilica of St. Francis, where we had the possibility of praying at his tomb. In the Major Basilica, we gazed at the art of Giotto which narrates the life of the poor man of Assisi. We visited the Basilica of St. Clare, where her body is found. There we rested in prayer thanking God for her exemplary life dedicated totally to Christ.

One of the principal moments of our pilgrimage in Assisi was that of prayer at the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the inspirer and patron of the internet who guided us in all the pilgrimage. The following visit was La Verna, the place of the stigmata of St. Francis. Our day at La Verna was marked by silence and contemplation which had its climax in the Eucharistic celebration in the chapel of brother Lawrence. On the same day we visited Cortona, the city of St. Margreth of Cortona.

On the 3rd of May we visited the friars who are in St. Anthony Parish -Viareggio at the sea of Ligure. The meeting and sharing with the parish priest Fr. Elzeario Nowak together with the food prepared for us were the moments of joy and

getting to know each other. There was a moment of recreation and rest at the sea.

In our programme we would not miss to visit Florence, the place of art, drawings and European sculpture where we had the grace of celebrating the mass in the chapel of the Holy Cross, the center of Franciscan spirituality in the city.



On the last day, we went to Padua and prayed on the tomb of St. Antony in Verona, we visited the Basilica of St. Mark and gazed at the beauty of the city.

The heart of each day was the Eucharist, the source and summit of our pilgrimage. Our daily time table was marked the recitation of the Rosary, the chaplet of Divine Mercy, meditation on the Gospel of the day and religious songs. All these contributed to the wellbeing of our communion among us and helped us in difficult to persevere in the spirit of prayer and penance.

Though the canonization of Carlo Acutis though did not take place we came back strengthened by his example witness of life as a young person. It taught us that “the Eucharist is our high way towards heaven”.

In the Jubilee year as pilgrims of hope, we went back to our homes with hearts full of gratitude and hope. We were united spiritually with the whole Church in celebrating the newness of grace with Pope Leo XIV and we continue carrying to the world the message of peace and hope.

We are grateful to God for the graces and gifts received, pilgrims of hope and friends of Carlo Acutis.

Fr. Kanizy Kąkol OFM, the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Poland (Katowice – Panewniki).

Fr. Kanizy is the first friar coming from the Province of the Friars Minor of Katowice. He arrived at Smolensk in 1992. The new Franciscan convent and the chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary were blessed by the Archbishop of Mosca Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz on 21.11.1999. The convent was canonically erected on 23.05.2007. In fact, two friars live there carrying out pastoral activities in the whole Region of Smolensk.

The website of Smolensk parish (in Russian language is):
<http://catholic-smolensk.com>

OFM Pilgrims of Hope

Send comgen@ofm.org an article (maximum 4000 characters including spaces) telling the story of the Jubilee 2025 experienced by your OFM Fraternity.



Pro Monialibus



Assembly of the Bikira Maria Association of English-speaking Poor Clares of Africa *Lusaka, Zambia, 5-19 May 2025*



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The Bikira Maria Association comprises English-speaking Poor Clares in Africa and was canonically erected in 1995. Currently it consists of seven sui juris monasteries and seven foundations found in different countries and these are: Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

This year Bikira Maria Association held its 9th General Assembly which also marked its 40th anniversary at Kasisi retreat center on 5th to 19th May, 2025 with a theme “Clarian Contemplatives on the Synodal Journey: Definition, Identity, Purpose.”

The main objectives of this Assembly were: to review the Association Statutes with a view of becoming a Federation; to elect our New Leadership team; to evaluate our performance; to draw a tentative plan for the coming 6 six years.

To help us with the deliberations, we were blessed with the presences of Br. Frederick Odhiambo, OFM, Provincial Minister of the Province of St. Francis in East Africa and of Br. Fabio Cesar Gomes, OFM, the General Delegate *Pro Monial-*

ibus. Our dream for the future is to become a Federation so as to prevent any monastery from being isolated, particularly on the huge continent of Africa. We seek to promote our Franciscan / Clarian spirituality in the Africa context.

Thence, to support one another in the areas of fraternity, sustainability, and formation.

Sister Tumelo Limata, Assembly's Secretary

Life *in the Order*



Solemn professions

17th May, Prov. S. Francesco Stimmatizzato (Italy)

Br. Daniele Aretini

Br. Francesco Messeri



Priestly Ordinations

10th May, Prov. Prov. Immaculate Conception (USA)

Br. Jack Sidoti

† 15th May: Br. Lutwin (Walter) Krämer, Prov. St. Elizabeth (Germany)

† 25th April: Br. Symeon Marciniak, Prov. Immaculate Conception (Poland)

† 18th April: Br. Jozo Gogić, Prov. Holy Cross (Bosnia-Argentina)

Information received from the General Secretariat



Deceased Brothers

† 24th May: Br. Kosma Hollek, Prov. Assumption of the BVM (Poland)

† 21st May: Br. Michael Chowning, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)

† 16th May: Br. Bartłomiej Cholewa, Province of Our Lady of the Angels (Poland); Br. Reynaldo Hernández González, Prov. SS. Peter and Paul (Mexico).





Pope Leo XIV begins his Petrine ministry



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On May 18, on the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Pope Leo XIV celebrated the Mass for the official beginning of his Petrine ministry. In his homily, he emphasized that to Peter has been entrusted the task of “loving more” and of giving his life for the sheep.

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Apostolic Penitentiary Extension of the “five-year faculties”



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On the 10th March, 2025, the Major Penitentiary communicated to the Procurator General of the Order the granting to our Order of the extension of the special faculties: this is the “regulatory” granting of the faculties, which the General Minister can extend to the priests to whom he intends to delegate them.

The Rescript of the Apostolic Penitentiary (Prot. N. 523/25) establishes that this grant includes the faculty to absolve penitents from all censures, excommunications and interdicts, not declared nor reserved, and also the faculty to dispense, for just cause, from private vows, even commuting them with works of piety or penance, provided that no one's rights are infringed.

With regard to “faculties”, it must be kept in mind that with the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera* the Holy Father extended to all confessors the faculty to absolve from cases of abortion, whilst the dispensation from irregularities arising from cooperation in procuring abortion - both with regard to ordination and with regard to the exercise of the ministry - remains reserved to the Apostolic Penitentiary. Furthermore, the cases

reserved to the Holy See (which are the *delicta graviora*) continue to be so, for which confessors must always necessarily resort to the Penitentiary, aware that the response is ordinarily assured within 24 hours.



The Minister General with a decree of the 14th April, 2025, following the indications of the Apostolic Penitentiary, delegates the aforementioned faculties no longer to all friars, but to the following friars of the Order, provided that they are approved by the local Ordinary to hear confessions: provincial ministers and vicars, guardians, parish priests, rectors of Franciscan sanctuaries and churches, penitentiaries and friars who have the office of confessors in the aforementioned sanctuaries and churches, chaplains of prisons, hospitals and retirement homes.

Read the Decree by the Apostolic Penitentiary: [Latino](#) and [Italiano](#) (original) - [English](#) e [Español](#) (translations)

Read the Decree by the Minister General: [Italiano](#) (original) - [English](#) and [Español](#) (translations)

Sister Tiziana Merletti Appointed Secretary of the Dicastery for Consecrated Life

Former Superior General of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor



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The Holy Father has appointed the Reverend Sr. Tiziana Merletti, former superior general of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, as secretary of the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life.

Curriculum vitae

Sr. Merletti was born on 30 September 1959 in Pineto, Teramo, Italy. In 1986 she gave her first religious vows in the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. In 1984 she was awarded a degree in jurisprudence from the then Libera Università Abruzzese degli Studi “Gabriele d’Annunzio” in Teramo and, in 1992, a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. From 2004 to 2013 she was superior general of her religious Institute. She is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Canon Law of the Pontifical University *Antonianum* in Rome, and collaborates as a canon lawyer with the International Union of Superiors General.

We wish good service to Sister Tiziana, who this year accompanied the formation of the General Definitory, on the way of accompaniment of the current situations of fragility of institutions in Religious Life, including those of the Entities, which require new visions and practices.

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