

**THE PLENARY
 COUNCIL
 OF THE ORDER**

A MOMENT OF FRATERNAL
 DISCERNMENT FOR THE
 FUTURE OF THE ORDER
 AFTER THE CHAPTERS
 OF MATS



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**The Plenary Council
 of the Order 2025**
Assisi, 8-12 June

From the 8th to 12th June, 2025, at *Domus Pacis*, adjacent to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels at the Porziuncola, the Plenary Council of the Order of Friars Minor (PCO) took place. This is an institutional event of great importance, celebrated right next to the place that represents the cradle of the Order, where St. Francis lived fundamental moments of his vocation.

But what exactly is the Plenary Council of the Order?

It is a fraternal assembly that brings together representatives from all the Conferences of the Order around the world. Approximately 60 friars participated, including two delegates from each Conference or Region, together with the Minister General and his Definitory,



various members of the support staff, translators, and secretaries.

The main purpose of the PCO was to reflect deeply on the journey of the Order, address current challenges, and formulate concrete proposals for the next General Chapter in 2027. On this occasion, the insights that emerged during the recent Chapter of Mats will also be revisited.

Amongst the central themes of the 2025 edition are:

- ▶ Accompanying the processes of degrowth and transformation of the Entities;
- ▶ An evaluation of the current structure of the Conferences and Regions of the Order;
- ▶ Reflection on the number and role of the Definitors General;
- ▶ Review of the mandates of the 2021 General Chapter.

All of this will be lived in a spirit of listening, discernment, and fraternity, under the guiding theme:

“Living the Gospel, incarnating the charism, responding to the mission.”

In the coming days a special issue of *Fraternitas* will be published with all the news, interviews and documents of the Chapter of Mats and the Plenary Council of the Order.

Tempo Forte



Communiqué Tempo Forte



Ordo Fratrum Minorum Secretarius Generalis

Communiqué of the General Definitive concerning the March 2025 Tempo Forte.

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Government of the Order

General Curia Agenda



- ☑ From 27 June to 3 July Br Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will be in Phoenix (United States) for the OFM Fundraising Partners Meeting 2025.
- ☑ From the 15th June to 9th August, Br. Dennis Tayo, General Animator for the Missions, will participate in the OFM Missionary Course for Africa, which will be held in Kampala (Uganda) at the shrine of Monoyo.
- ☑ From the 21st to 24th June, Br Joaquin Echeverry, General Definitive, will visit the Province of St Juniper Serra, Mexico.
- ☑ From the 24th to 25th June, the General Curia will host a formation meeting on the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults for delegates of the Southern European Conference (CEM). From the General Curia, Br. Iurii Semko, Br. Joe Condren, Br. Albert Schmucki and Br. Cesare Vaiani, will participate.

Chapters



Provincial Chapter of The Holy Family in Egypt Cairo, 2-6 June 2025



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The Provincial Chapter for the Holy Family Province of the Friars Minor in Egypt took place from the 2nd – 6th June. For the first time all the friars of the Province participated at the Provincial chapter in the Marian city at al Mokattam, in Cairo.

The chapter was celebrated by Br. Raimondo Girgis from the Custody of the Holy Land accompanied by the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jimenez under the theme: “They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength ...they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint” (Isaiah 40:31). The friars evaluated the life and mission of the Province orienting it to the values of fraternity and collaboration. During the chapter the following were elected: Minister Provincial Br. Filippo Faragalla. Vicar Provincial: Br. Lucas Helmi.

Definitors: Br. Milad Shehata, Br. Milad Guda, Br. Milad Rizk and Br. Gergis Matta.

We congratulate these friars under the guidance of the Holy Family to work for the good of the Province and the people of God that are entrusted to them.

Chapter of the Guardianate in Turkey

Toward a Franciscan Fraternity Rooted in Dialogue and Hospitality



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From the 28th to 31st May 2025, the triennial Chapter of the OFM Fraternity for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey was held at the Friary of Sancta Maria Draperis in Istanbul.

This Guardianate, present in both Istanbul and Izmir, is directly under the care of the Minister General of the Order. The current nine friars - from Argentina, Congo, France, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan and the USA - live their mission under the obedience of the Minister General. The Chapter was presided over by the General Delegate Br. John Wong, who is also the General Definitor representing Asia-Oceania.

Prior to the Chapter, an official General Visitation was carried out by Br. Stéphane Delavelle (Custody of the Holy Martyrs in Morocco) and Br. Saulo Duarte, Vice Bursar General. In his letter to the Chapter, Br. Massimo Fusarelli expressed deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks

to the outgoing Guardian, Br. Eleuthère Makuta Baharanyi, for his service. Br. Massimo encouraged the fraternity to continue expanding the Order's mission in Turkey. In his message, the Minister General affirmed that Dialogue, which includes intercultural dialogue, is the Franciscan way of life, lived out through concrete solidarity with the marginalized, fraternal service to the poor, and working together with people and organizations of different faiths and traditions. On the first day of the Chapter, the Minister General issued a Decree appointing Br. Felianus Dogon (originally from Indonesia) as the new Guardian, and Br. Pascal Robert (from Pakistan) as Vicar.

During the Chapter, the friars reaffirmed their identity as an International Fraternity in Mission - both for Dialogue and in Dialogue - in its ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural forms. They agreed that inculturation is essential: learn-

ing the Turkish language, understanding the culture, life, and sensitivities of the people, and knowing the history of the land, are all necessary to form meaningful and respectful relationships.

This Franciscan way of life is a dynamic process, seeking the good of the other and expressing a real fraternal spirit of hospitality. It calls for ongoing formation and personal conversion.



The friars also reaffirmed their commitment to the Annual Dialogue Course, pastoral work in parishes and with university students, care for migrants and the incarcerated, and the Laudato Si' environmental project. They pledged to continue developing these initiatives over the next three years through local House Chapters and collaboration with mission partners. Looking ahead, the friars envision a stable and deeply rooted Franciscan presence in Turkey – one that breathes hospitality and peace – and one day becoming a Foundation of the Order, with local vocations, sustainable leadership, and a fraternal economy.

Chapter of the Province of the Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)

Br Antonino Catalfamo was re-elected Provincial Minister



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From the 28th April to 2nd May and from 26th to 30th May 2025, the Friars Minor of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of Sicily (Italy) gathered at the 'St John the Baptist Spirituality House' in Palermo to celebrate the XXVII Provincial Chapter, with the theme "Called to Freedom. Brothers and Prophets of Communion", under the presidency of the General Visitor, Br Luca Pozzi.

During the first week of Chapter, the friars were engaged in a discussion on three fundamental themes which they drew from a previous phase of listening to the brothers and the people: Fraternal Life, Youth and Itinerancy. Through fraternal discussion they sought to discern the Lord's will.

In the second week, the work culminated in the voting on the proposals to be implemented and the election of the new Government of the Province for the triennium 2025-2028: Br Antonino Catalfamo, Provincial Minister; Br

Lorenzo Iacono, Provincial Vicar; Definitors: Br Alfio Lanfranco, Br Giuseppe Garofalo, Br Gaetano Morreale and Br Tindaro Faranda.

During the last days of Chapter, some friars and sisters came to visit the Chapter to engage in a moment of dialogue and discussion.

The Provincial Minister of Malta, Br. Anthony Chircop, on the path of acquaintance that the Provinces of Malta and Sicily have been on for a little over a year; the Re-

gional Minister of the SFO and YouFra, to look together with the friars at shared paths in the area of the proclamation of the Gospel in today's society; the 'Presence of the Gospel' Movement, the Secular Missionary Institute 'Presence of the Gospel' and the Franciscan Fraternity of Hope 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary', to discuss the issue of the Gospel in the world; realities with which the Province shares the path of following according to the intuition of Francis of Assisi.



Animation in the Order



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Course 2025

*St Francis' Canticle of the Creatures:
care for the weak and for an integral ecology*



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From the 26th to 31st May 2025, the annual Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) course was held, organised by the OFM General Curia office of the same name in collaboration with the Pontifical University *Antonianum* in Rome.

The objective of this activity is to provide the JPIC animators of the OFM and the Franciscan Family with different perspectives of study, analysis and reflection on themes related to justice, peace and the care of the common home, so that they have theoretical and practical tools to carry out the service entrusted to them. Course 2025, entitled 'The Canticle of the Creatures of St. Francis of Assisi: Care for the Weak and for an Integral Ecology' (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 10), is part of the celebration of the 8th Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures, the 10th anniversary of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the Jubilee Year. During the week, a comprehensive programme was developed that included: a perspective on the current ecological crisis, in-depth analyses of the Canticle of the Creatures from different angles, historical, biblical, philosophical and theological. Particular attention was paid to practical aspects, including concrete ecological projects such as the eco-pastoral project in Indonesia and the Pontifical University *Antonianum* integral ecology programme. The Encyclical *Laudato Si'* was also analysed. The programme included a guided tour of Assisi, and there were sessions on JPIC animation in Franciscan spirituality and strategies for animation projects in Franciscan entities.

On Friday, the 30th May, the Order of Friars Minor and the PUA, in the person of Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM Minister General and Grand Chancellor of the PUA, conferred an award on persons and institutions that have distinguished themselves for their commitment to integral ecology. They are Patriarch Bartholomew I, Leonardo Boff, the Panamanian Ecclesial Network, and the *Laudato Si'* Movement. "Dear awardees, you are not only receiving recognition today, but if you will allow me to say, you have an even greater responsibility: to continue to be a prophetic voice in a world that often, too often, prefers profit to the common good. To all of you, then, I address this final invitation: please return to your communities, bringing with you the seed of integral ecological conversion. May the Canticle of the Creatures resound in our homes, may *Laudato Si'* 'inspire our daily choices, even small ones. The future of the earth, God's gift, is also in our hands, but above all in our hearts," said Br. Massimo at the end of the award ceremony.

Motivation for the awards

Patriarch Bartholomew I is a Christian leader who has insisted on the care of creation from a Christian ethical and moral perspective: he has often stated that "Committing a crime against nature is a sin", he has consistently promoted ecological conversion, and he has promoted ecumenical, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue to address the challenges of our common home.

Leonardo Boff is one of the pioneers of ecotheology worldwide. In his 1996 book *“Ecology: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor”*, he justifies the commitment of the Christian faith to care for our common home. Furthermore, he was one of the drafters of the Earth Charter, adopted by the United Nations in 2003. Boff was able to update the message of Francis of Assisi to the current ecological crisis, offering paths based on the spirituality of the Italian saint.

The **Laudato Si’ Movement** is a global Catholic movement born under the inspiration of the *Laudato Si’* Encyclical, which seeks to implement its principles centred on ecological sustainability, climate justice and ecological conversion. Therefore, thanks to its commitment to these values and the various strategies promoted during its ten years of existence, it has been possible to bring

about a change of mentality within and outside the Church. The award was presented to Lorna Gold of the *Laudato Si’* Movement.

The aim of the **Pan-American Ecclesial Network** is to raise awareness in the Americas of the importance of the Amazon for all humanity, to establish, among the local Churches of different South American countries located in the Amazon basin, a joint pastoral work with differentiated priorities, to create a development model that favours the poor and serves the common good. This ecclesial model has made it possible to listen to the voices of the peoples and communities in the area, especially the indigenous peoples, to protect their lives and that of the Amazon ecosystems (Amazon biome) through networked socio-ecclesial action. The award was presented to Monsignor Rafael Cob García president of REPAM.



News from the Entities

India, FRISM 2025: Meeting of Student Friars *Reviving the Franciscan Spirit for Today’s World*



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The Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India, held its annual Friars Students’ Meet - FRISM 2025 - at St. Aloysius Friary in Palamaner. 77 friars in formation, from postulants to pastoral-year friars, gathered for a vibrant week of celebrating brotherhood, reflecting Franciscan *forma vitae*, and renewing the call to be a friar minor today. Under the theme *“Pilgrims of Hope: Journeying with Creation in the Spirit of St. Francis,”* the gathering invited participants to deep-

en their understanding of their vocation and face today’s challenges with fresh conviction.

The event opened with a heartfelt prayer service and warm welcome from Br. Sleeva Reddy, Guardian of St. Louis Friary. Br. Shaji Nicholas, Secretary for Formation and Studies, set the tone by presenting the gathering’s goals, while Br. Saji Mathew, Vicar Provincial, delivered a compelling keynote urging friars to engage with their fraternal relationships by deepening, sensing, seeing, and hearing. Throughout the week, sessions tackled timely and essential topics: Br. Joy Sebastian led discussions on sexual orientation, healthy relationships, and integrating personal needs and values in formation. Fr. Sahaya Arockiasamy, CSsR, unpacked the effects of social media on formation, while Br. Charles Bernard spoke on the unique significance of the lay brotherhood. Environmental stewardship took centre stage with Br. Lourdu Augustine guiding participants to draft practical action plans for *“Caring for Our Common Home.”* Br. Rajasekhar Gopu introduced the wide horizon of Franciscan ministries across India and beyond, sparking enthusiasm for mission.

Yet, FRISM 2025 was not just about talks - it pulsed with shared prayer, teamwork, meals, games, and cultural events, weaving a strong fabric of fraternity among the brothers.

The final days brimmed with powerful moments of commitment as 35 brothers reaffirmed their “yes” to the Franciscan journey through the Renewal of Vows, 21 brothers stepped joyfully into the next Chapter with the clothing of 8 novices on their entry into the Novitiate, together with 5 brothers making their Solemn Profession, marked their life-changing commitment before the Minister Provincial. Additionally, two friars from the Custody of Mary Mother of God had made their Solemn Profession earlier in the

year in May; 4, at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Nanesera, in the hands of Br. Santosh Ekka, the Custos. Br. Xavier Durairaj, Minister Provincial, in his concluding address, offered a clear and inspiring vision: reminding the young friars of the Order’s expectations and urging them to take up the demanding yet rewarding task of living the Franciscan call with relevance and authenticity in today’s world.

FRISM 2025 left the friar students, novices and postulants reoriented, reenergized, and renewed in the joy and purpose of their vocation – ready to journey on as true pilgrims of hope.

Solemn Professions of Four friars in the Philippines

Province of St Peter Baptist



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Quezon City, Philippines – 29th May, 2025 - A grace-filled and significant celebration of faith and commitment took place at the Minor Basilica of St Peter Baptist as four friars made their solemn profession of vows in the presence of the faithful, family, and members of the Franciscan community. The sacred rite was presided over by the Minister Provincial, Br. Lino Gregorio V. Redoblado, OFM. In his homily, the Minister Provincial emphasized that the celebration was not merely a human endeavour, but a sacred moment “God-given and entrusted to those making their profession” He reminded the congregation that consecrated life is a bold declaration – a radical response of love that conforms the professed to the Cross, like the Tau of St. Francis. “Consecrated life,” the

Minister Provincial proclaimed, “is an emptying of oneself – not out of loss, but out of love. It is the giving up of our lives so that they may reflect Christ’s life more clearly and joyfully.” He reflected on the transformative nature of this vocation, describing it as a call to be “transfigured into a humble and joyful reflection of God.” The Franciscan community rejoices in this sacred event, and the faithful are invited to continue praying for these newly solemnly professed brothers – that they may remain faithful to their vows and shine as witnesses of God’s love and peace in the world. The newly Solemnly Professed: Br. Rojan Ayunting, Br. Jerome Ramos, Br. Francis Dominic Zorilla, Br. Jeffrey Tolentino.



Meeting of provincials from Benevento, Naples, Salerno and Calabria

On the way to a new, single province in 2028



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From 26th to 30th May 2025, at the friary of Our Lady of Sanità in Tropea, Calabria, the four provincial Ministers and Definitors of the Provinces of Benevento, Naples, Salerno and Calabria, which have already been engaged for four years on a path of restructuring, met. After the Provincial Chapters which voted for the birth of a new and single Province in 2028, the Provincial Definitors took stock of the situation and made the necessary decisions to continue the journey. Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, was with the Definitors on the 28th and 29th May, proposing a reflection on how to live this passage and on several practical elements. 'The journey of these Provinces is a sign of hope for the Order because it is a concrete response to the changes taking place in our realities, maintaining our passion for the Holy Gospel and for the mission,' said Br Massimo.



Historic First for the Province of Ireland

The celebrations for the 100th birthday of Br Salvador Kenny



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On the 14th May a joyous gathering took place in Multyfarnham friary, Co Westmeath, Ireland to celebrate the 100th birthday of Br Salvador Kenny

OFM. In the 800 years since the arrival of the friars in these islands, there is no record of any friar in Ireland or Britain reaching this great age.

Br.Salvador (baptismal name, John) grew up near Edgeworthstown in Co Longford, which is only 15 minutes from the friary. Br Salvador has served in various roles in many friaries over his long years- in Ireland (Killarney, Galway, Merchants' Quay, Belfast, Athlone, Multyfarnham), in Rome, where he lived for four years before taking Solemn Vows, and in Louvain, in Belgium.

Always a 'man of the people' - those whom he has met over the years attest to the simplicity and sincerity of his presence.

A true son of St Francis, steeped in a humble and simple lifestyle, he is committed to prayer and to the daily Mass On his birth-



day, family members, many friends and friars from around Ireland gathered in glorious weather in Multyfarnham. Mass was celebrated with David Collins OFM (Vicar Provincial) as celebrant, and Liam Kelly OFM the preacher. Others, who could not be present on the day, joined via the church webcam.

The celebration continued with a simple reception in the nearby cookery school. There was a cake to be cut, a cheque from the President of the Republic of Ireland, Mr. Michael D. Higgins, a Papal blessing (one of the last from Pope Francis!) and a blessing from the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli. A wonderful

day was had by all, especially the centenarian himself, Br Salvador. Ad Multos Annos!

In the Photo: *Br. David Collins and Br. Liam Kelly with Br Salvador Kenny.*

Meeting of Provincial Ministers of Poland An Interprovincial House for Temporary Formations



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On the 11th and 12th May 2025, a meeting of the Provincial Ministers of the five Polish Provinces belonging to the North-Slavic Conference (SLAN) of the Order of Friars Minor was held in the friary of Krakow-Bronowice. The main theme of the meeting was collaboration in the field of inter-provincial formation in the postulancy, novitiate and post-novitiate phases. Dur-

ing the meeting, the decision was made to establish an interprovincial house for the Temporarily Professed in the Krakow-Bronowice friary. This initiative was jointly approved by four Provincial Ministers of the Friars Minor in Poland.

Fr. Euzebiusz Skorupa, OFM



NEW PRESIDENT OF

SLAN

The North-Slavic Conference elected **Br. Witosław Sztyk** as the new President of the Conference, **Br. Juraj Mihaly** as Vice-President and **Br. Dominik Banaś** as Secretary.

LIFE in the Order



Solemn professions

5th February, Prov. St Philip of Jesus (Mexico)

Br. Luis Alberto Cano Kantún,
Br. Wilber Jesús López Medrano

29th May, Prov. St Peter Baptist (Philippines)

Br. Rojan Ayunting,
Br. Jerome Ramos,
Br. Francis Dominic Zorilla,
Br. Jeffrey Tolentino



Priestly Ordinations

20th March, Prov. St. Philip of Jesus (Mexico)
Br. David Enrique Chi Brito



Deceased Brothers

- † 9th June: Br. Tarcisio Rondinelli, Custody of the Holy Land
- † 6th June: Br. Richard Patrick Mc Feely, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)
- † 30th May: Br. Bernhard Pacher, Prov. St. Leopold (Austria-Italy)
- † 28th May: Br. Javier Yoo Soo-il, Prov. The Holy Martyrs of Korea (South Korea)
- † 18th May: Br. Nenad Galić, Prov. of the Assumption BVM (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

† 4th May: Br. Giulio Bonifazio, Prov. St Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

† 9th April: Br. Pancrazio Lorenzin, Prov. of St Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

Information received from the General Secretariat



Franciscan Centenaries



800th anniversary of the 'Canticle of Brother Sun' in Kalwaria Pałacowska Polonia, 24-26 maggio 2025



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From 24th to 26th May 2025, at the Shrine of Kalwaria Pałacowska, situated in the picturesque Eastern Carpathians of Poland, celebrations were held for the 800th anniversary of the composition of the Canticle of Brother Sun by St Francis of Assisi. The entire event was attended by the Provincial Ministers of the ten Polish Franciscan Provinces, together with the friars of the Czech and Slovak entities. Gathered to give thanks to God for the gift of creation, they published a common message in which they ask for the intercession of our Seraphic Father Francis to help them to constantly recognise the presence of the Creator in every creature and to praise Him together with all of nature. The message reads: "Help us to love the world as You love it... Give us the courage to recognise that we are not the masters of creation, but its sisters and brothers, called to care for it. Inspire us to be humble and persevering men in the reconstruction of the Church and the world, which in so many places is in need of healing and renewal'.



During the three-day celebration, the brothers raised their hymns of praise using the words of St Francis, thanking God for the sun and moon, for water and fire, for the earth, flowers and grass, for those who forgive and bear with patience, and also for bodily death. Prayers were held in the basilica, along the chapel paths, at the chapel near the Polish-Ukrainian border and on the church square, where two jubilee trees were planted: St Francis and St Clare. Each day, provincial ministers and Franciscan bishops celebrated Mass. The commemorative homilies were delivered by Br Wojciech Kulig OFMConv, president of the Federation of Central-Eastern Europe of the Order of Friars

Minor Conventual, Mgr Damian Muskus OFM, auxiliary bishop of Krakow, and Mgr Piotr Kleszcz OFMConv, auxiliary bishop of Łódź. The Jubilee also offered a moment of reflection on integral ecology and the Christian response to environmental and social crises. The invited speakers addressed these issues with great competence: Prof.

Zbigniew Wróblewski (Catholic University of Lublin), Br. Stanisław Jaromi OFMConv - philosopher and ecologist, Bishop Damian Muskus OFM - evangelist and author, Agata Chmura - educator at the Natura 2000 Centre in Myczkowce, Grzegorz Hop - tour guide and environmental educator. The participants also had the opportunity to learn about the natural and spiritual value of the Kalwaria Pałacowska region and Pogórze Przemyskie. During the meeting, the jubilee volume was also presented: "Time for Gratitude.

For the care of the world - our common home. A guide to the Franciscan jubilee of the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of Brother Sun (1225-2025)".

Amongst the guests of honour were also representatives of the Franciscan herbalist tradition: Br Łukasz Ścieszka, director of the Franciscan Herbalist Shop in Rychwałd, and Br Tomasz Tęgowski, phytotherapist of the Centre for Monastic Medicine 'Medicina Monasterialis' in Elbląg. They shared their experience and presented the products of traditional monastic medicine. To crown the celebrations, the 'Formica' theatre company of the Franciscan Academic Pastoral of Krakow presented a play prepared especially for the occasion, inspired by the spirituality and gratitude of St Francis for the gift of creation.



OFS, National Elective Chapter of Nicaragua 6 - 8 June 2025



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The canonically established national fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Nicaragua held its elective Chapter from the 6th to 8th June 2025. The Chapter was presided over by International Councillor Ana Maria Raffo, OFS, delegate of Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS.

Unfortunately, the members of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants were unable to attend, but they delegated Br Justo Marvin Guillén, OFM, who spoke to the Chapter members about 'fraternal service': a reflection that brought to light some aspects that enabled the Chapter members to understand the meaning

of the theme of the Chapter '*we love because He whom we have loved first*' (1Jn 4:19b).

The Chapter was attended by 77 members, including 61 Chapter members and 16 observers. In an elective session, the Chapter members elected the new National Council, in which Ana Verónica Palacios Osegueda, OFS, was elected National Minister and International Councilor. On Sunday the 8th June, the new Council took office and the celebration marked the end of the Chapter. We wish the new Council fruitful service during the next three years.

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Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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