



INDEX

New Province of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM in Madagascar1
 General Curia Agenda 2
 Reflections by Br. Massimo - June 2025..... 3
 Franciscan Dialogue
 Program 2025 Kicks Off..... 4
 Collaboration agreement between the PUA of Rome and the University of St. Buenaventura of Bogotá..... 5
 Life in the Order 6
 800th Anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures in Chile 7
 From the Canticle to the Laudario of Cortona..... 8
 Chapter of the Province of St. Francis..... 9
 Chapter of the Province of St. Elizabeth10
 Chapter of the Province of St. Anthony (Italy).....11
 2nd Asian Franciscan Formators Training..... 12
 Inter-Obediential Mission Course in Africa Opens in Uganda..... 13
 Meeting of Delegates for the Poor Clares and Associated Communities 14
 cTc N. 65..... 14
 Birth of the OFS in Kazakhstan 15
 Koinonia N° 125 – 2025.1..... 15
 The Franciscans in Ukraine 16
 Seventh edition of the Franciscan Youth Experience ESSO 2025.....17
 Br. Francesco Ielpo, OFM, new Custos of the Holy Land 18
 Pope Leo XIV celebrates Corpus Christi..... 18
 Martyrdom of four new OFM venerables approved 19
 Venerable Isabel María de San Rafael Aranda Sánchez, OSC (1889-1937) 20

New Province of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM in Madagascar
A new historic stage for the Friars Minor in Madagascar after 65 years of presence on the island

On the 16th June, 2025, the new Province of the Immaculate Conception was erected, marking a historic moment for the Order of Friars Minor in the Islands of Madagascar and Mauritius. The Minister General appointed the first Government of the new Province, composed of the Minister Provincial Br. Jean Pierre Rasolonjanahary, OFM, the Vicar Provincial Br. Jean Charles Rakotondranaivo, OFM, and the Provincial Definitors Br. Flavio Andrison, OFM, Br. Bruno Razafindrabe, OFM, Br. Lalaina Amidicael Rajaonarison, OFM and Br. Jacques Etienne Raharosolondraibe, OFM.

The themes and challenges of the Provincial Chapter include fraternity, identity, fraternal economy and solidarity. Evangelism focuses on the poor and frontier areas, with a strong commitment to economic accountability, transparency, and ongoing formation. Vocation promotion is decentralized to respond to the specific needs of each friar and the different fraternities.

This evolution of the Franciscan presence in Madagascar represents not only a journey of faith, but also a concrete commitment to the social and economic



growth of local communities. The new Province currently has 48 Friars with solemn profession: 35 serve in Madagascar, 4 in Mauritius and 9 outside the Province. In initial formation there are 37 Friars in temporary profession: 18 study philosophy, 14 theology and 5 are outside the Province. The Novitiate welcomes 7 novices, while the Postulancy has 11 postulants, of whom 3 in the second year and 8 in the first year.

The Houses of Formation and the Fraternities of the new Province are distributed as follows: in the Diocese of Antsirabe there are the Aspirantate of St. Damian, the Fraternity of St. Anthony of Padua for the Postulancy, the Fraternity of St. Mary of the Angels for the Novitiate and

the Fraternity of St. James of the March for philosophical studies. In Antananarivo, the Fraternity of St. Joseph hosts the Scholasticate, while other presences are found in the dioceses of Ambanja, Tsiroanomandidy and Farafangana. On the island of Mauritius, the friars are present with the Fraternity of St. Anthony of Padua and the Branch House of St. Bernardine of Siena.

History of the Franciscan presence in Madagascar

The presence of the Friars Minor in Madagascar began in 1960, marking the beginning of an important spiritual and social adventure on the island. In 1980 this mission was linked to the «Africa Project», an initiative aimed at promoting growth and

evangelization in various African nations.

Ten years later, in 1990, the mission was integrated into the Province of St. Francis in Africa and Madagascar, strengthening the ties between the Franciscan fraternities.

In 1992 the Franciscan Foundation of Madagascar was founded, a significant step to consolidate the work and activities of the fraternity. In 2000, Madagascar and the island of Mauritius became part of the same Foundation, highlighting a missionary unity that transcended maritime borders.

In 2006, Madagascar was recognized as a dependent Custody of the Province of St. Francis in Africa, a sign of maturity and autonomy in the mission. In 2023, Br. Manuel Corullón, OFM is appointed delegate of the Minister General to accompany the transition of the Custody to a Province, marking another important step in the fraternity's growth path. Finally, on the 16th June, 2025, the Franciscan Province of the Immaculate Conception was erected in Madagascar and Mauritius.



General Curia Agenda



- ☑ The Minister General is participating in the meeting of "OFM Fundraisers" which began on the 27th June 27 and ends on the 3rd July in Phoenix (United States).
- ☑ The Inter-Obedience Missionary Course is underway at the Munyonyo Shrine in Kampala, Uganda, Africa. This training meeting began on the 15th June 2025 and will continue until the 9th August. Participants include Br. Dennis Tayo and Br. Francisco Gomez together with the Secretaries and Mission Animators of their respective Orders.
- ☑ From the 7th to 18th July, the meeting of the General Definitory for the Tempo Forte of July will be held at the General Curia.
- ☑ On the 12th July, the Minister General will participate in the Federal Day of the Poor Clares of Lazio in Rieti, Italy.

Government of the Order



Reflections by Br. Massimo - June 2025

When the Spirit blows upon the mats



WWW.OFM.ORG

In the days leading up to Pentecost, amid so many rumors of war and cries of hope, something unprecedented in our history happened at Santa Maria degli Angeli. From June 1st to 8th, right next to the Porziuncola, the first International Chapter of the Mats was celebrated with friars, sisters, and Franciscan laity sitting together, as equals, on the same mats.



tree. Differences in sensitivity, diverse pastoral urgencies, even the struggles to get in tune found space in a climate of common search.

The final Document that the Plenary Council approved immediately afterwards represents the synthesis delivered to all the brothers of the Order journeying toward the General Chapter of 2027 and to laity and sisters who are co-responsible with us in the common service to the joy of the Gospel.

The Chapter concluded on Pentecost day, around the Porziuncola. As eight hundred years ago, the Spirit descended upon this family, somewhat tested but always alive, whispering that Francis continues to walk ahead of us, barefoot and smiling.

The mats have been folded, the participants have returned to their lands. But something has truly changed: we have discovered that together we can look further. Without fear. Perhaps it is the beginning of a new Franciscan season.

The name is not folklore: it recalls Francis who gathered his followers on the ground, without prestigious chairs, in the huts of Santa Maria. This year, however, the mats welcomed an absolute novelty: brown habits of the friars alongside the veils of the sisters, colorful clothes of the OFS laity and the Gi.Fra. Different voices, experiences that interweave, cultures that speak to each other. For the first time in our eight-hundred-year history, the entire family gathered not to celebrate but to discern the future together.

From five continents came representatives of every Franciscan vocation, bringing the fruits of the chapters that had prepared this moment. The objective was clear: to renew the common charism in a prophetic way, but this time doing it truly together.

Incarnating the charism, living the Gospel of fraternity, responding to the mission - three pillars that guided intense days of listening and dialogue.

One of the most beautiful discoveries was recognizing how much we can learn from young people. Not the usual generational lament, but sincere admiration for their desire for authentic faith, creativity, passion for climate justice. They reminded us of the taste for evangelical freshness.

We did not avoid difficult questions. There was open discussion about clericalism, about voices that dominate by suffocating the more fragile ones, about the real struggle to become co-responsible for life and mission as brothers and sisters. The reflection on the «Church going forth» challenged us: the Franciscan of the future is called to be increasingly a pilgrim on the roads of the world, free and poor.

The confrontation between different languages, mentalities and experiences was sometimes difficult - as in every true family - but always crossed by that tenderness that comes from belonging to the same





News from the Order

Franciscan Dialogue Program 2025 Kicks Off Cebu, Philippines, 16 June – 5 July 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG

The Franciscan Dialogue Program 2025 officially opened at the FSPIF Center in Talamban, Cebu City (Philippines) led by the OFM Province of San Antonio de Padua. Themed “Radiating Dialogue in Harmony with the Rest of God’s Creation at the Heart of the Inter-Franciscan Family,” the event began with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Br. Errol Ortiz, OFM, Provincial Secretary of the Province of St. Anthony De Padua.

The formation journey spans from June 16 until July 5 and unfolds in three dynamic phases: the Cognitive Phase, the Affective and Psychomotor Phase - to be held in Camotes Island - and the Integration Phase.

The program emphasizes the spirituality of communion and collaboration, exploring the richness of ecumenical dialogue, interreligious dialogue, and encounters with diverse faith traditions. Participants will also engage in immersive community experiences, deepening their witness of solidarity through grassroots interactions.

14 delegates from various Franciscan provinces are participating:

Br. Bien Justine Patriarca, Br. Niño Rosal, Br. Nikko Alfredo Sunga, Br. Jason Ricardo Salado,

and Br. Jose Rafael Villas (Province of San Pedro Bautista, Philippines, OFM);

Br. Rodel Jayson Masocol, Br. Richard Ramirez Rosete, and Br. Jazon Mark Vermug Garin (Province of San Antonio de Padua, Philippines, OFM);

Br. Benjamin Tovue, and Br. James Bubu (Foundation of St. Francis of Assisi in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, OFM)

Br. Jude Sandig (Province of Our Lady of Lourdes, OFMConv.);

Br. Carl Reguindin (Province of Our Lady of Lourdes, OFMCap.);

Sr. Jill Tariao and Sr. Maricon Rigor (Philippine South Province, SFIC - Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Mother of God

Through collaborative learning, prayer, and lived mission, the program nurtures a deeper kinship among Franciscan communities, rooted in dialogue, harmony, and care for creation.

Br. Niño Rosal, OFM



Collaboration agreement between the PUA of Rome and the University of St. Buenaventura of Bogotá

18th June 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG



In a climate of profound academic harmony, on 18th June, the Pontifical University *Antonianum* of Rome and the University of St. Buenaventura of Bogotá (Colombia), signed an agreement for a double degree that represents a highly significant step in the internationalisation processes of the two institutions and in the enhancement of the heritage of Franciscan thought in the global context.

The agreement came about in response to the invitation made by the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor during the Congress of OFM Study and Research Centres, held in 2023.

On that occasion, Br Massimo Fusarelli, urging closer cooperation between the Order's Higher Study Centres, said: *"I hope that we can arrive at not only a greater collaboration, but even at the construction of a network of the Study and Research Centres, which is veritably its very own. I hope this Congress can help us to achieve this goal, which could infuse a new and stimulating impetus into the academic spheres of our Order"* (Address of the Minister General to the participants of the Congress, Rome - General Curia, 4 July 2023).

The agreement forms a part of a framework of institutional collaboration aimed at promoting

joint scientific research, the co-designing of integrated training programmes and the coordinated publication of studies and contributions in academic journals and periodicals.

In this perspective, the cooperation between the two universities takes the form of a strategic platform of multilevel collaboration, capable of strengthening international academic networks, boosting the mobility of lecturers and researchers and enhancing the role of the university as an active player in social and cultural transformation.

The official signing ceremony was held in the presence of the Rector of the Pontifical University *Antonianum*, Br Agustín Hernández, OFM; the Chancellor of the University of St. Buenaventura and Minister Provincial of the Province of Santa Fe of Colombia, Br José Alirio Urbina, OFM; the Rector of the of the University of St. Buenaventura of Bogotá, Br Andrés Miguel Casaletth Faciolince, OFM; the General Secretary of the Pontifical University *Antonianum*, Br Efrén Parmenio Ortiz; the Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the *Antonianum*, Br Carlos Salto Solà, OFM; the Director of the Development Office, Mr. Paolo Cancelli; as well as of numerous eminent institutional and academic representatives of both universities.

LIFE in the Order



Solemn professions

31st May, Prov. St. Thomas the Apostle (India)

Br. Brian Onil D' Souza

Br. Ralbin Joeal Joseph Savari Raj

Br. Karthik James John Bosco

Br. Dhillip Kumar Musaligalla

Br. Allwin Joseph Karra

31st May, Custody of Mary Mother of God (India)

Br. Kamal Ekka

Br. Pratap Kumar Xess

17th May, Prov. St. Francis Stigmatized (Italy)

Br. Daniele Aretini

Br. Francesco Messeri

5th March, Prov. The Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)

Br. Biagio Maria Pietro La Spada

Br. Alessandro Maria Labita

15th February, Prov. The Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)

Br. Angelo Giuseppe Maria Raspante



Deceased Brothers

† 22nd June: Br. Gourdet Thierry (Henri), Prov. Blessed John Duns Scotus (Belgium)

† 15th June: Br. García Rodríguez José Carmelo, Prov. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Spain)

† 14th June: Br. Buonfrate Pio (Giovanni), Prov. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Italy)

† 13th June: Br. Karačić Dane, Prov. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

† 12th June: Br. Alessandro Domenicale, Province of St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

† 11th June: Br. Piątek Roman, Prov. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Poland)

† 7th June: Br. Rubaga Pierino (Pierino Domenico), Prov. of St Anthony (Italy)

† 3rd June: Br. Muñoz Martín Mauricio (Pedro), Prov. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Spain)

Information received from the General Secretariat



Franciscan Centenaries



800th Anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures in Chile

A blessed icon of St. Francis will be a “pilgrim” in the country



WWW.OFM.ORG



On Friday, the 6th June, in the Provincial Definitory of the Franciscan Friars of Chile – Province of the Most Holy Trinity – held at the Fraternity of San Francisco de la Alameda, an icon of St. Francis of Assisi was blessed, made by Federico Aguirre, iconographer and associate professor at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University. The work will be exhibited in different parts of Chile in the context of the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures and the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

For Br. Julio Campos, OFM, Animator of the Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the Franciscan Order in Chile, it is very important to enhance the figure of St. Francis through an icon and a pilgrimage with his image. *“In the year in which we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the writing of the Canticle of the Creatures, it is extremely appropriate to encourage a more sustainable life based on an ethic of care for our Common Home,”* he said.

Therefore, the pilgrimage of this work seeks to reach different pastoral and academic spheres. In the words of Br. Julio, he hopes to visit Franciscan convents and universities such as the Pontifical Catholic University, the Catholic University of Temuco, the Alberto Hurtado University *“and other universities that welcome our invitation to spread a message of care for our Common Home,”* he explained.

In this line, the JPIC animator in Chile is clear: *“The fact of celebrating the 800th anniversary of*

the Canticle of the Creatures and the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Encyclical Laudato Si', more than making history, means making the message contained in this poem and in this encyclical current. It is about creating an installation that is relevant to the world and that allows itself to be surprised by the traces of God present in creation,” he said.

Bond of faith

For Federico Aguirre, the author of the work, the process of creating an icon is about contact with Franciscan spirituality: *“In a way, I become part of that common heritage, and it is a very beautiful thing, because you get in touch with the community, you get in touch with the figure of St. Francis and his work. So it was very significant for the relevance that this saint had in evangelization, especially in Latin America.”*

The artist then added: *“It is an order that attracts me a lot, precisely because of these principles of humility and connection with nature, with animals. I believe that St. Francis is a wonderful figure for our time, deeply marked by a mystical experience, and in the case of the Order and the figure of St. Francis, I am particularly attracted to him.”*

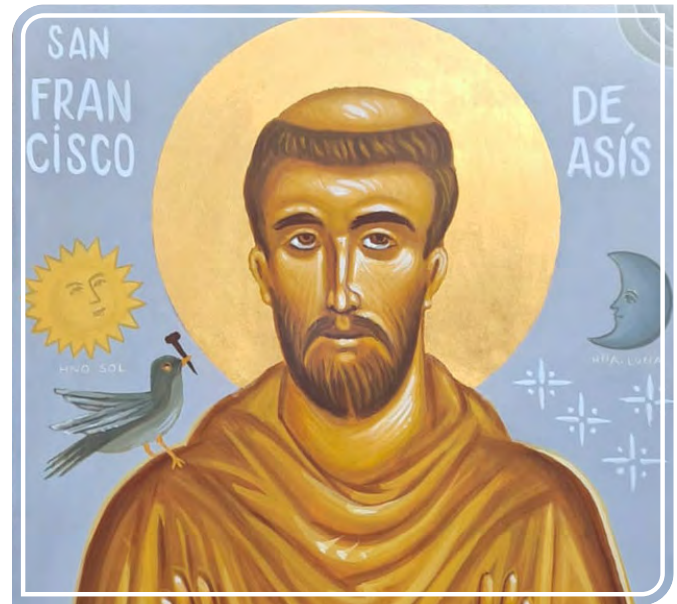
Work for Evangelization

Finally, Br. Julio Campos, OFM, JPIC Animator in Chile, concluded: *“Today, speaking of an ethics of familiarity, an ethics that integrates everyone as brothers and sisters, is an evangelical journey to seek paths of justice, peace and care for our Common Home. To speak of Jesus is to speak of the Kingdom, as a reality present here and now, of which we await the fullness.”*

For his part, Federico Aguirre also praised the work of Friar Andresito, a figure who perfectly embodies the Franciscan spirit, *“because he stands on the edge of the city to help and accompany the most needy. For me, the Franciscan church of Recoleta represents the closeness of St. Francis to the weakest.”*

The work

The icon of St. Francis is made with the traditional “egg tempera” technique, used from the origins of painting to the Renaissance. It measures 70 x 50 cm and its frames feature drawings depicting the Canticum of the Creatures, “which depicts all those forces and figures of nature in which St. Francis recognizes a brother or sister,” explained Federico Aguirre. It also features gold on the halo surrounding the head of the Poverello of Assisi: “I like to incorporate local elements, such as a bird on the shoulder, which I took from a work by Violeta Parra, where this bird is said to be a friend of St. Francis, accompanying him in the joyful pain of the stigmata,” said the artist and professor.



From the Canticum to the Laudario of Cortona

4 concerts at the Sanctuary of San Damiano in Assisi



WWW.OFM.ORG



Over the course of 4 evenings (14th June, 5th July, 16th August, 20th September) the ARMONIOSO-INCANTO Vocal Group will perform the lauds of the Laudario di Cortona in the evocative square in front of the sanctuary of San Damiano, in Assisi, dividing them according to theme and liturgical time.

The last evening, on the occasion of the feast of the Canticum, will be dedicated to the performance of the Franciscan-themed lauds, which probably testify to some echoes of the original melody with which the Canticum of the Creatures was sung, now lost.

The Laudario di Cortona n. 91 is a manuscript codex, preserved in the Municipal Library of Cortona (Italy), of the second half of the thirteenth century

containing a collection of lauds, 46 of which have musical notation. The first 16 lauds are dedicated to Our Lady, while the others follow the liturgical calendar: Christmas, Easter, Franciscan feasts and others.

The codex represents one of the first examples of the vernacular, a form of expression closer to the sacred folk traditions. Especially in Central Italy, where Christianity and in particular Catholicism was more felt, the form of the lauda took hold in a predominant way also following the teachings of St. Francis. The melodies in the laudario are influenced by pre-existing Gregorian melodies contaminated by refrains of dances and popular songs: therefore, the sacred in the popular. The Christian of the time was thus closer to the message of the sacred texts through an intelligible linguistic mediation.

The ARMONIOSOINCANTO Vocal Group made the recording of the entire work, trying to highlight all those aspects of medieval religiosity linked to the popular message expressed by the sacred texts in the vernacular. Founded in 1997, it is made up of variable ensembles with a prevalence of female voices who work looking for a vocal purity as close as possible to the interpretative canons of medieval and Renaissance music.

Source and info:

www.centenarifrancescaniassisi.org

Altissimu,
onnipotente,
bon Signore,
tue so' le laude, la gloria
e l'honore et onne
benedictione.
Ad Te solo, Altissimu,
se konfane e nullu
homo ène dignu Te
mentovare.



Reading the Canticum of the Creatures – Italiano

Chapters



Chapter of the Province of St. Francis East Africa, 9th-15th June 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG

The Province of Saint Francis in East Africa held its Provincial Chapter from 9th June until 15th June, 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, at the “Saint Antony of Padua Langata” Theological Friary. On 13th June, the Chapter, through election, chose new Government that comprises:

Minister Provincial: Br. Matthias Kule, OFM

Vicar Provincial: Br. Sebastian Unsner, OFM

Definitors Provincial: Br. Carilus Onyango, OFM; Br. Theonest Kagenzi, OFM; Br. Rorand Gu-

moshabe, OFM; Br. Peter Mburu, OFM; Br. Gidion Twongirwe, OFM.

In the photos, the new Provincial Definitory, Minister and Vicar.

*Br. Victor Orwa, OFM
Provincial Communication*



Chapter of the Province of St. Elizabeth



WWW.OFM.ORG



From March 31 to April 3, 2025, the first part of the Provincial Chapter of the German Franciscan Province of St. Elizabeth took place in Vierzehneiligen.

In addition to the 50 capitulars and three minute-takers, 11 other brothers participated in this open part of the chapter. In addition to the report by the Provincial Minister, Br. Markus Fuhrmann, OFM and the exchange on provincial issues, the focus was on the structural planning of the Province, on a culture of prevention by evaluating cases of sexual abuse, and the future of the Franciscans in Central Europe.

The friars of the Province of St. Elizabeth were particularly pleased to welcome the following guests to discuss this last point: the Provincial Minister of Netherlands, Br. Theo van Adrichen, OFM; the Provincial Minister of Austria, Br. Fritz Wenigwieser, OFM; the Provincial Minister of the German Capuchin Province, Br. Helmut Rakowski, OFMConv; and the Provincial Vicar of the German Province of the Franciscan Minorites, Br. Mateusz Kotyła, OFMConv.

General Definitor Br. Albert Schmucki, OFM participated in the entire first part of the Chapter, contributing to the discussion on typical reactions among friars and lay people in cases of sexual abuse, with a keynote speech and a report from the entire Order.

The Chapter proposals were also presented, which will be discussed and adopted in the second part of the Chapter in June at Haus Ohrbeck near Osnabrück.

About 60 friars of the German Franciscan Province of St. Elizabeth gathered in the week after Pentecost in Haus Ohrbeck near Osnabrück for the second part of their Chapter.

In addition to the election of the Definitory, the agenda included topics such as the importance of stronger international cooperation between the Provinces of the Order in north-western Europe.

The newly elected provincial government includes Minister Provincial Br. Markus Fuhrmann and Vicar Provincial Br. Stefan Federbusch, neither of whom were up for election at this Chapter, as well as Definitors Br. Thomas Ferencik, Br. Martin Lütticke, Br. Maximilian Wagner and Br. Johannes Baptist Freyer.

Special spiritual highlights of the Provincial Chapter included a spiritual gathering on the theme of "Franciscan Sources of Hope," a Eucharistic celebration with Bishop Dominicus Meier OSB of Osnabrück, and a pilgrimage to the Commandery in Lage, a place of pilgrimage cared for by Franciscan Conventuals.



Chapter of the Province of St. Anthony (Italy)

“Go over and join this chariot”



WWW.OFM.ORG

The Chapter of the Friars Minor of the Province of St. Anthony of Northern Italy concluded on 16 May in Camposampiero, Padua. For almost two weeks, sixty friars gathered to discuss the situation of the Province, explore future prospects, and elect a new Provincial Minister and government. The work of the Chapter was inspired and guided by the passage from the Acts of the Apostles recounting the encounter between Philip and the eunuch.

From the outset of the preparatory process, this icon inspired the suggestion of inviting lay people to participate in meetings on the topics to be discussed by the Chapter. The first outcome of the Chapter process was therefore this tangible experience of synodality, which many friars may have experienced for the first time.

This experience intensified during the Chapter, where those who often identify as evangelisers spontaneously identified with Philip and experienced the novelty of being evangelised by young lay people who led a *lectio divina* on the passage from the Acts.

The synodal experience was further realised through the participation of lay people, sisters, as well as young friars in the Chapter commissions. Recognising these essential demands, the Capitulars identified tools and initiatives to

help them grow and develop. This is perhaps the path to humble and fraternal management of each person's power, which we more familiarly call minority.

The Province, which extends throughout Northern Italy, includes nearly four hundred friars. Several of them serve in missions (in Guinea Bissau, Burundi and other places), teach in Rome or Jerusalem.

Most of them, however, serve in forty-four convents, parishes and shrines located in an area stretching from Piedmont to Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and from Trentino to Emilia-Romagna. Eleven of these convents are particularly dedicated to serving the poor, providing soup kitchens, hospitality services and integration projects for immigrants.

Numerous evangelisation activities are organised for young people in missions, parishes and shrines. The Institute of Ecumenical Studies, an important cultural centre based in Venice, is also worth mentioning.

The elected Provincial, Br. Antonio Scabio, previously served as Minister in the former Venetian Province from 2010 to 2015. In 2015, he was elected Definitor General, a position he will hold until 2021.





Animation of the Order

2nd Asian Franciscan Formators Training *Opening of the 2025 edition*



WWW.OFM.ORG



The second cycle of the Asian Franciscan Formators Training (AFFT) officially began on June 16, 2025, with a Mass led by Br. Derrick Yap, OFM, Custos of Singapore-Malaysia and AFFT Coordinator.

In his homily, Br. Derrick reflected on the inner struggles of formation ministry, reminding participants that “God alone is enough” and encouraging them to let God’s grace overflow into their service.

Participants were invited to write down a special grace they had received and their hopes for the training - offering these as intentions for the journey ahead.

AFFT, launched in March 2024 and supported by the Franciscan Conference of Asia-Oceania (FCAO), is a formation program that blends on-line modules with two in-person residencies - in Manila (June) and Singapore (November).

It emphasizes scriptures, interculturality, emotional formation, safeguarding, adult and digital pedagogy, tailored for the Asian context.

This batch includes 14 friars from Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Myanmar, and the Philippines. The first week is facilitated by Dr. Ignatius Chan, followed by Dr. Ed Caligner, with Dr. Josephine Chin serving as co-coordinator, all from Singapore.

AFFT continues to form compassionate, culturally aware Franciscan formators - rooted in both soul and structure.

Participants: 1. Br. Pio-Paul Ng, OFM (Hong Kong) 2. Br. Sixtus Peter, OFM (Malaysia) 3. Br. Crispus Mosinoh, OFM (Malaysia) 4. Br. Asep Cahyono, OFM (Indonesia) 5. Br. Wolfhelmus Apriliano, OFM (Indonesia) 6. Br. Raymond Yim Yeung, OFM (Hong Kong) 7. Br. Augustine Seng, OFM (Myanmar) 8. Br. Cosma Vu, OFM (Vietnam) 9. Br. Tuan Nguyen, OFM (Vietnam) 10. Br. Mark Gill Yongco, OFM (Philippines) 11. Br. Joey Donato, OFM (Philippines) 12. Br. Mark Joy Bassallajes, OFM (Philippines) 13. Br. Rey Silme Silangan, OFM (Philippines)

Br. Makki Cruz, OFM

Inter-Obediential Mission Course in Africa Opens in Uganda

Pilgrims of Hope, 16 June – 9 August 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG



In a spirit of unity, contemplation, and missionary zeal, fifteen friars from the three branches of the first Order - OFM, OFM-Conv., and OFM-Cap. - have begun their two-month journey of preparation and formation in the Inter-Obediential Mission Course in Africa (IMCA), held for the second time at the Friary of the Conventual Friars in Kampala, Uganda.

Prepared over months of collaboration, discernment, and logistical planning, the course opened on June 16, 2025, with a deeply symbolic and moving liturgy held in front of the Munyonyo Shrine in the Uganda Martyrs Chapel, a place resonant with witness, sacrifice, and faith.

From the first moment, the tone was set: the friars gathered from different corners of Africa as pilgrims of hope, walking together toward deeper missionary renewal in the Franciscan spirit. They will be joined by three alumni, one coming from each of the three Orders, who will serve as course coordinators, with Br. Dennis Tayo,

OFM, as the course animator, accompanying them throughout this journey.

The general theme - *“Sent to Africa as renewed missionaries, formed as pilgrims of hope, united in St Francis’ way, to hear the cries of the poor and creation”* - was beautifully embodied in the elements of the opening celebration. In the stillness of the early Ugandan morning, the friars listened to the Cantic of the Creatures, prayed with the soil beneath their feet, and joined the global Franciscan family in this Jubilee year by centering their intentions around creation and reconciliation.

As course coordinators and animator, representing each branch of the First Order, stood before the participants, a powerful ritual unfolded. Each lit a candle from a single flame, which was then passed to every friar - an act signifying the unity of the Franciscan charism and the shared light of Christ that binds all three Orders in mission, in St Francis’ ways. Following this, the three friars

joined together to pump water from a single source, symbolizing the living water of the Spirit. This water was then used to bless the senses of each friar, invoking openness, discernment, and courage as they embark on this two-month journey, which will end on August 09, 2025.

More than just a course, this is a lived experience of inter-obediential fraternity, missionary reawakening, and ecological conversion.

Rooted in the African soil, enriched by diverse voices, and guided by the spirit of St. Francis, these two months promise to be a time of encounter - with self, with brothers, with the poor, and with creation.

As the friars journey together, may the fire lit from one source and the water drawn from one well continue to fuel their hearts for the missions ahead.

*By: Br. Dennis T. Tayo, OFM
General Animator for Missions
and IMCA Course Animator
2025*



Meeting of Delegates for the Poor Clares and Associated Communities

General Curia, 10 June 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG



On the morning of 10 June 2025, a fraternal and enriching meeting took place at the General Curia of the Order of Friars Minor between the Delegates for the Poor Clares and the Aggregate Communities: Br. Clézio Menezes dos Santos, OFM^{Cap}, and Br. Fábio Gomes, OFM.

The meeting involved sharing experiences of supporting contemplative communities and reflecting on current challenges and profound richness of the Clarian vocation.

Both emphasised that serving alongside the Sisters is a constant source of learning and proclamation, revealing the beauty of a vocation that springs from two inseparable spiritual sources: Francis and Clare of Assisi.

It was a propitious occasion to discern paths of collaboration of collaboration and reinforce the mission of animation and closeness to contempla-

tive fraternities. With their hidden life, these fraternities are the praying heart of the Church and the Franciscan Family.

During the meeting, anticipation was also shared for the new Constitutions of the Poor Clares and the Capuchin Poor Clares, which are currently being finalised. Updating these fundamental texts is seen as an opportunity for renewal and creative fidelity to the charism.

Planning has also begun for a future meeting to be attended by the Delegate of the Friars Minor Conventual. The date will be confirmed shortly.

This dialogue between the three Franciscan Orders strengthens communion and renews the commitment to walk together in the service of the contemplative life of women.

N. 65

June 2025

With much gratitude and a bit of emotion we are introducing Communion and Communication No. 65. It's the last step of the journey following the directions given by St Francis to the Poor Clares in the Words of Exhortation, Audite, poverelle - Listen, Little Poor Ones. We are doing this precisely in the chronological time that marks the 800th anniversary of its composition.

Happy reading! The editorial team

Download PDF cTc N. 65: [Italiano](#)
[English](#) - [Español](#) - [Français](#) - [Português](#)



Birth of the OFS in Kazakhstan

Astana, solemn profession of four sisters



WWW.OFM.ORG



Four sisters from Astana, Kazakhstan, have made their perpetual profession in the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS). This is a very significant moment in the history of the OFS, marking the official birth of the Order in Kazakhstan.

With great hope, we trust that this small seed will continue to grow.

The friars of the First Order and the TOR are committed to providing spiritual support to these new members of the OFS, strengthening and solidifying their vocation.

Special thanks go to the Conventual friars for their valuable commitment and collaboration with the CIOFS (International Council of the OFS).

Koinonia N° 125 – 2025.1

A praise born of suffering



WWW.OFM.ORG

The Franciscan Centenarians do not cease to surprise and nourish us at the same time. After joining Francis last year, accompanying him on his journey to La Verna, we have certainly been able to get to know and understand him a little better.

We enjoyed his beatific vision of the flamboyant Seraphim and ended up without any doubt just like him: that is, despite the pain caused by the wounds received, we finally came down with a renewed desire “to serve the lepers” with more determination.

In this way the pain of injustice, of the wrongs suffered, not only failed to annihilate us, but becomes a gushing source of service.

St. Francis remains an inexhaustible source of inspiration for this year as well, stimulating both our intellect and our actions with his *praise*.

Yes, because once the strength of his body failed, making him physically unable to serve, his spirit always remained fertile and fruitful in expressing his gratitude to the Creator with song and praise.

In this context, the *Canticle of the Creatures* becomes a strong invitation for each of us to follow his example.

Download the pdf:

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





The Franciscans in Ukraine

A light of hope in the time of war



WWW.OFM.ORG



In the Ukrainian City of Konotop, 90 kilometers from the border with Russia, exists the fraternity that assists the victims of war. Br. Romuald Zagurski, OFM has been carrying out of his service in this fraternity for nine years, three of which were during the war conflict. His vocational history and his actual mission are live testimonies of the Franciscan charism in the midst of adversity.

His vocational history begun in his infancy when his mother took him to the Franciscan Parish. under the guidance of Br. Malachias, he began as an altar server at the age of 6-7 years. At the age 10, he was inspired by the same friar, he felt the first call to the Franciscan way of life. after a short period of his youth, the experience of a retreat made him enter the Order not only to become a priest but to change his way of life.

When the war broke out, the Franciscan convent was transformed into the refugee center. the friars offered all their resources for food, medicine to the needy even though it was not easy to get the basic needs. In this difficult situation Br. Romuald did not lose hope: "Now the people are without hope" with no help. It is like that. Deluded in this situation one does not sees the end. in this year jubilee year which is characterized by the theme of hope as promulgated by Pope Francis, the brothers look for the possibility of encourag-

ing the people to deal with the problems with the help of God."

Among the various services that the brothers offer there is also in the basement of the church more than 25 children receive psychological therapy everyday so as to be helped to overcome the trauma caused by war. they are also given an English course.

"We are aware that Europe is tired of helping people but we continue looking for the means of sustaining such persons who have lost everything: Their houses, their property and in some cases their families"

Br. Romuald underlines that his main motive is to serve all the needy regardless of their religion. his final message is an appeal to hope: "It is only with God that we are able to go forward and look at the future with hope, avoiding falling into despair".



A new project that the friars are carrying out is constructing a kitchen with the capacity of feeding 100 refugees every day. this work will be important considering that the help from the State is not enough to cover all the basic needs of the people. any help, even though little, represents the hope of continuing carrying out this humanitarian act.

Seventh edition of the Franciscan Youth Experience ESSO 2025 Chile, 6th-8th June 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG

From Friday, the 6th June 6 till Sunday the 8th June 2025, the *San Felipe de Jesús* Franciscan Youth House of the Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile hosted the seventh edition of the Franciscan Youth Experience ESSO (“Spirit of the Lord and His Holy Operation”), an expression used by St. Francis of Assisi to refer to the Holy Spirit.

This experience aims to ensure that young people celebrate the feast of Pentecost with moments of prayer, spaces for formation and reflection, work in fraternity and missionary activities, based on the Franciscan experience of the Spirit of the Lord and his holy operation.

Br. Ronald Villalobos, OFM, head of the Franciscan Youth House, expressed a positive opinion of the experience. *“This year 20 young people participated, 9 of whom for the first time at ESSO. They were also accompanied by the seven friars who currently form the fraternity of San Felipe de Jesús.”*



Regarding the formation spaces, Br. Ronald added that *“the experience saw the presence of two friars from our Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile, Br. José Manuel Hernández, OFM, with the theme St. Francis and the Holy Spirit (online); and Friar Santiago Andrade, OFM, who spoke about The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Scriptures,”* he said.

Diego Ignacio, from the House of Young Franciscans, participated in ESSO for the first time and was overjoyed. *“I lived it with an open heart. I went with the desire to give myself completely, to let the Spirit breathe in me too. It was a deeply enriching opportunity to share faith and build fraternity. I could see how all the participants presented themselves with a generous and open at-*

titude, willing to be surprised by what was being proposed to us,” he said.

Catalina Leal Arévalo, a member of the Service Team at the House of Young Franciscans - Chapel of St. Philip of Jesus, added that, for some time, Pentecost has had a special character in her life.

“It is the culmination of a precious time to deepen the mystery of faith and experience the deepest love. Being there, gathered with our brothers and sisters, just as the apostles experienced it, gave great meaning to this celebration.”

“I also greatly appreciated deepening the way in which Francis perceived this breath; with the heart as a dwelling, capable of working in our lives and always in need of its holy operation”, emphasizing that it was also his first time at ESSO. *“I hope that this breath will continue to act throughout the year; and do not forget that He is close, very close, in our most intimate center: the heart,”* he said gratefully.

Finally, Javiera Veas Jiménez, a member of the liturgical team and catechist from the Natividad del Señor parish in the municipality of Navidad, was another first-time participant in ESSO 2025.

“It called me to share life with others and to look inside myself. I was able to stop and perceive, admire and contemplate the Lord in the present, in creation, in others and in myself. I felt my young brothers and sisters engaged, happy, and willing, open to the action of the Holy Spirit, happy to be able to share their faith with others, and committed to the Lord and His Church.”

“I would like to invite all young people who have not yet participated to be encouraged to take the time on their journey to live this experience, which will fill them with love, the love of the One who abides forever, which will fill them completely,” Javiera expressed gratefully.

ESSO 2025 ended on Sunday with the Mass of Pentecost presided over by Br. Lino Miranda, OFM, Minister Provincial, during which the young people of the Home Service Team renewed their service of welcoming, listening and accompanying the youth community.



Br. Francesco Ielpo, OFM, new Custos of the Holy Land and Guardian of Mount Zion



WWW.OFM.ORG

On this day, 24th June, 2025, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV confirmed the election—conducted by the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor together with his Definitory—of our friar Francesco Ielpo, OFM as Custos of the Holy Land and Guardian of Mount Zion.



Br. Francesco Ielpo, an Italian national, was born in Lauria (PZ) on the 18th May 1970. He professed his solemn vows in 1998 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2000. From 1994 to 2010, he served as a religious education teacher and, since 2000, as Rector of the Franciscanum Luzzago Institute in Brescia. Between 2006 and 2010; he was a member of the National Council of FIDAE (Federation of Educational Activ-

ity Institutes), and from 2007 to 2010, served as Provincial Definitory of the Lombard Province. From 2010 to 2013, he ministered as parish priest of the Franciscan Parish of Saint Anthony of Padua in Varese. In September 2013, he was appointed Commissary of the Holy Land for Lombardy, with his mandate extended in 2016 to include the entire Province of

Northern Italy. Since 2014, he has served on the Board of Directors of the Pro Terra Sancta Association. Since 2022, he has also held the role of President of the Holy Land Foundation, while simultaneously serving as Delegate of the Custos of the Holy Land for Italy and as General Delegate for the restructuring of the Provinces in Campania, Basilicata, and Calabria. To friar Francesco Ielpo, we extend our heartfelt wishes for a fruitful service in this “Pearl of the Missions” of the Order. At the same time, we express the profound gratitude of the Minister General and his Definitory to Br. Francesco Patton, who concludes his dedicated and generous nine-year service to the mission in the Holy Land.

Pope Leo XIV celebrates Corpus Christi *Let us bring Jesus to everyone's heart*



WWW.OFM.ORG



On the 22nd June 2025 in the esplanade of the Papal Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, Pope Leo presided over Holy Mass and the traditional Eu-

charistic procession. In his homily, the Holy Father reflected on the Gospel episode of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, highlighting how Jesus responds to the urgency of hunger with “the sign of sharing”.

“This is the logic that saves the hungry people: Jesus works according to God’s style, teaching them to do the same”, the Pope stressed, recalling that especially in this Jubilee Year, *“the example of the Lord remains for us an urgent criterion of action and service: sharing bread, to multiply hope, proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God”.*

The Holy Father indicated the importance of the Eucharist as the true, real and substantial presence of the Saviour, who *“transforms the bread into himself, to transform us into Him”.* The celebration of Corpus Christi reminds us that *“Corpus*

Christi makes us, that is, the Church herself, the body of the Lord”.

The liturgical act ended with the Eucharistic procession which, as the Pope explained, is “*a sign of this journey*” where “*together, shepherds and flock, we nourish ourselves with the Blessed Sacrament, adore Him and carry Him through the streets*”. The procession with the Blessed Sacrament traveled

along Via Merulana towards the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where the Pope imparted the Eucharistic Blessing.

[Read Pope Leo’s homily](#)

See the [full photo gallery](#)

Watch the [video on Youtube](#)

Martyrdom of four new OFM venerables approved

Killed between 1944 and 1945 in hatred of the faith



WWW.OFM.ORG



During the audience granted to His Eminence Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, Pope Leo XIV authorized the same Dicastery to promulgate the Decree concerning the martyrdom of the Servants of God Raimond Cayré, diocesan priest, Gerard Martin Cendrier, professed religious of the Order of Friars Minor, Roger Vallée, seminarian, Jean Mestre, and 46 companions, killed between 1944 and 1945 in hatred of the faith, in various places, in the context of the same persecution.

The story of this group of martyrs took place in the historical context of the Second World War. From June 1940 onwards, the north of France was occupied by the Nazis, while in the southern part of the country a collaborationist government was established with headquarters in Vichy.

On February 16, 1943, the “*Service du Travail Obligatoire*” (STO) was introduced by the Vichy regime to send a large number of French citizens to work in Germany and replace the Germans engaged at the front.

Many priests, religious and lay people belonging to Catholic associations followed the French workers

sent to German territory incognito. In particular, a group of twelve Friars Minor can be recognized amongst them, later nicknamed by Eloi Leclerc, the “*twelve larks*”. They lived in a forced labor barrack, as if they were in a convent, at Camp Roland, between the current Geldernstrasse tram station and the hospital of the Sisters of St. Vincent in Nippes, a district north of Cologne, then in Camp Grenzstrasse.

The twelve Franciscans organized religious services, meetings and mutual aid for forced laborers, illegal activities in the eyes of the SS. They were arrested on the 13th July, 1944 by the Gestapo and, after interrogation in the prison of Brauweiler and a brief detention in the camp of Cologne-Deutz, transferred to the camp of Buchenwald on the 16th September, 1944.

Four of these Friars Minor have been recognized as martyrs. They are:

Venerable Br. Gérard Cendrier; was born in Paris on the 16th June, 1920, he entered the novitiate in 1939. He devoted himself particularly to visiting French citizens interned in Cologne’s hospitals, often unknown people with no identity. He identified them, supported them with small gifts of cigarettes and sweets. He spent many hours of the night at Cologne station. Arrested on the 13th July 1944. He died on the 25th January, 1945, because he was refused treatment by the Langenstein infirmary, where he had sought help.

Venerable Br. Paul Le Ber; he was born in Landivisi-au on the 1st April 1920. One of the very few things left of him to come out of the concentration camp was a note addressed to a prisoner of war who had tried to give him food, when everyone was starving: “... Union, great union of prayers and suffering”.

He died in the Buchenwald concentration camp on the 13th April, 1945, killed by a gunshot.

Venerable Br. Joseph Paraire; he was born in Vincennes on the 2nd December, 1919. He was known as the “good Luigi”, he knew how to create a friendly atmosphere amongst the prisoners. He died on the 26th April 1945 in a carriage on the “death train” near Pocking (Bavaria). His remains were transferred to Vincennes for burial.

Venerable Br. André Boucher; was born in Cheniménil on the 3rd August, 1920. He tried to adapt his life as a religious to that of a forced laborer. He managed to keep his missal secretly, which many asked to read, as the only means of comfort. He died of pneumonia on the 15th March, 1945 in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The cause of these fifty French martyrs of Nazism was promoted by the French Episcopate.

Venerable Isabel María de San Rafael Aranda Sánchez, OSC (1889-1937)

The martyrdom of a nun of the Order of St. Clare has been recognized



WWW.OFM.ORG

On the 20th June, during the audience granted to His Eminence Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, the Supreme Pontiff authorized the same Dicastery to promulgate the Decree concerning the martyrdom of the Servants of God Manuel Izquierdo Izquierdo, diocesan priest, and 58 Companions of the Diocese of Jaén (Spain), killed between 1936 and 1938, in hatred of the faith, in different places in Spain, in the context of the same persecution.

The Venerable Servants of God of the Diocese of Jaén were killed in different places and times during the Spanish Civil War, which began in July 1936 and had aspects of cruel anti-Catholic persecution. On the night between the 12th and 13th January 1937, the Venerable Isabel María de San Rafael Aranda Sánchez, OSC (1889-1937), abbess of the monastery of Santa



Cruz (Santa Clara) de Martos, in the diocese of Jaén, was martyred in Las Casillas de Martos y Martos. She was born in Hinojosa del Duque (Cordoba) on July 12, 1889 and entered the monastery on the 8th December, 1903, at the age of 14. She made her solemn profession on the 19th March, 1922. She was appointed abbess in June 1936. On the 21st July of that year, together with 26 other sisters of the community, she was expelled from the ancient building that had been a monastery of Poor Clares for centuries. However,

she did not want to take refuge with her family where she could be safe, to continue to take care of her sisters. Then she settled with another elderly nun, Sister Josefa Contreras Escobedo, in the “Casa de las Ánimas”. She lived there until the 12th January, 1937. Included on the tragic wanted list, she was taken to the church of San Miguel, where she was reunited with the rest of the people whose death had been decreed. With two other nuns she was taken to the cemetery of Las Casillas. There she was abused and mistreated. Finally they shot her at point-blank range. After the war, her body was recognized and transferred to the crypt of the new Sanctuary of Santa María de la Villa. The beatification process, promoted by the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Jaén, took place from the 9th April 2016 to the 30th March, 2019.

Subscribe

Write us

Web

Follow us



Newsletter



comgen@ofm.org



www.ofm.org



@ofmorg



@fratrumminorum



@ofm.org

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

Director: Br Byron A. Chamann Anléu OFM
Translators: Br. John Luke OFM, Br. Arthur Andersen OFM, Br. Rick Martignetti OFM

OFM
Ordo Fratrum Minorum
© 2025 All rights reserved