



INDEX

Letter of the Minister General and Definitory to the whole Order on the Solemnity of Saint Francis 2025.....1  
 General Curia Agenda ..... 2  
 Feast of the Stigmata 2025..... 3  
 Feast of Canticle 2025..... 5  
 New meeting of the Definitors of the Iberian Peninsula .....6  
 Tempo Forte..... 6  
 International Photo Exhibition..... 7  
 Celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Song in Chile ..... 8  
 Opening of the Season of Creation 2025 in Vietnam..... 9  
 Life in the Order..... 10  
 OFS Australia: Fraternal and pastoral visit..... 11  
 Franciscan Bookmark ..... 12  
 OFS, National Elective Chapter in Slovakia..... 12  
 OFS, National Elective Chapter in New Zealand..... 13  
 26th Mariological Congress..... 14  
 Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal to Br. Magdy Helmy, OFM..... 15  
 St. Francis Feast..... 15  
 Flood emergency in Pakistan..... 16

**Letter of the Minister General and Definitory to the whole Order on the Solemnity of Saint Francis 2025**  
*On the 8th Centenary of the Canticle and the Pasch of Francis*

Dear brothers, dear sisters,

*May the Lord give you peace!*

This year, as we celebrate the feast of St Francis, we also conclude the eighth centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures (Canticle of Brother Sun) and look forward to the centenary of the Pasch of St Francis, to be celebrated next year (2026).

We find a link between the Canticle and the death of St Francis in the ancient account of the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, where, on hearing of the approach of his death, St Francis said:

“If I am to die soon, call Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me about Sister Death.” Those brothers came to him and, with many tears, sang the *Canticle of Brother Sun* and the other creatures of the



Lord, which the Saint himself had composed in his illness for the praise of the Lord and the consolation of his own soul and that of others. Before the last stanza he added one about Sister Death. (AC 7)

St Francis himself, then, encounters death accompanied by the singing of the Canticle. Only a short time earlier, he had added a verse about forgiveness, with the purpose of urging the Podesta and the Bishop of Assisi, who were in conflict, to be reconciled with each other.

Read the full text of the Letter:

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



## General Curia Agenda



- ☑ From the 26th to 28th September, 2025 Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will participate in the Franciscan Festival in Bologna, Italy; from the 28th to 30th he will be in Alexandria, Egypt, for the conference of the Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean.
- ☑ On the 2nd October he will be in Assisi for the Conference of General Ministers, on the 3rd October for the Conference of the Franciscan Family and later at Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi-Santa Maria degli Angeli for the Transitus of St. Francis; on the 4th October he will celebrate the Mass of the Solemnity of St. Francis at the Sacro Convento of Assisi. Afterwards he will be in Ascoli Piceno for the presentation of the book “Francis of Assisi: a restless life”.
- ☑ On the 7th October in Rome he will participate in the inauguration of the Academic Year of the Pontifical University Antonianum; afterwards, he will celebrate Mass at the General Chapter of the Franciscan Sisters of Alcantarine. On the 8th and 9th October he will participate in the events of the Jubilee of Consecrated Life in the Vatican.
- ☑ From the 25th September till the 2nd October, Br. Konrad Cholewa will be in Ukraine for a fraternal visit to the Province of St. Michael the Archangel. From the 6th to 10th October he will represent the General Definitory at the JPIC Continental Meeting of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ☑ From the 29th September till the 1st October, the meeting of the Permanent Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (TMAV) will take place in the General Curia, which will be attended by Br. Albert Schmucki (General Definitory and President of the Commission), Br. Iurii Semko and Br. Joe Condren (respectively Director and Secretary of the TMAV Office).
- ☑ On the 1st October, the Commission will meet Sr. Tiziana Merletti FSP, secretary of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. From the 6th to 14th October, Br. Albert will be in Austria for a fraternal visit to the Province of St. Leopold.
- ☑ From the 6th to 10th October, Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitory General, will be in Lisbon (Portugal) to participate in the meeting of the Southern European Conference (CEM).
- ☑ From the 6th to 13th October, Br. Sipehele Gwanisheni, Definitory General, will be in the Democratic Republic of Congo for a fraternal visit to the Province of Our Lady of the Angels.
- ☑ From October 2 to 4, Fr. Cesar Külkamp will participate in the Feast of St. Francis at the Sanctuary of St. Francis of the Stigmata in Canindé (Ceará, Brazil).
- ☑ From October 5 to 8, Fr. César Külkamp, General Definitory, will be in Lima (Peru) for a meeting with the definitors of the two Peruvian provinces and with Fr. Mario Wilson Ramos, General Visitor.

## Government of the Order



## Feast of the Stigmata 2025

### Pilgrims of Hope in La Verna



WWW.OFM.ORG



On the 16th and 17th September, the Feast of the Stigmata was celebrated in La Verna, an event that brings together hundreds of faithful and pilgrims every year in the place where 801 years ago St. Francis received the “embrace of the stigmata” from the Lord.

The celebration began on the evening of the 16th in the Sanctuary of La Verna with the recitation of First Vespers, presided over by the Vicar General Br. Ignacio Ceja.

That same evening in the parish of Chiusi della Verna a prayer was held with the young people who, immediately afterwards, made a night pilgrimage that took them to the Mount to participate in the Eucharistic celebration of the so-called Vigil of the Stigmata.

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, in the Eucharist addressed the many young people present, looking them in the eye, quoting the words of the Gospel he had just heard: *Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me* (Lk 9:23-24). «*But here, 800 years ago, Francis discovered what is inside those words. Not a threat, but an invitation to love as we could never imagine on our own,*» said the Minister, recalling how Francis was embraced by the Lord through the stigmata. Referring to the 50th anniversary of the profession of Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitor General present there, he said: “*Br. Cesare, in a short time, after 50 years, will still*

*say here before the altar of the Lord, ‘Thank you because you have called me’, he will tell us that it is possible to live this encounter and not just do it once and to go away. Here is a living person who knows me by name, this is Jesus.’*”

Then he continued by saying that “*Jesus Christ is a living person who comes to meet me and whom I can meet, he is a brother and a friend, a person who has not avoided suffering, but has given it meaning*”. The phrase “*Take up his cross and follow me*” does not mean seeking pain, but sharing it with Jesus because He has already transformed it, because in his wounds there are ours, there are those of all the suffering of the world.

During the Mass on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of his profession, Br.



Cesare Vaiani made an emotional renewal of vows in front of the Minister General, who congratulated him on his perseverance and his example of Franciscan life.

After the Eucharist, the Shrine remained open all night, for a vigil made up of moments of personal and shared prayer, for confessions: listening to stories, words, and new perspectives to live together the beauty of the Cross.

In the celebration on the 17th September, the Solemnity of the Impressions of the Stigmata of St. Francis, Br. Massimo Fusarelli focused his homily on Hope, drawing inspiration from the Jubilee year still in progress. But what Hope, what hopes? Where is the Lord? *“Francis also comes up here with his hopes. His disappointments. Even, in a moment of trial and crisis. When he climbs this mountain, Francis asks the Lord: “Who are you, Most High and Good Lord? And who am I, little and*

*poor Francis?”*, recalled Br. Massimo, emphasizing how the Poor man-*Poverello* understood precisely in La Verna that he had to completely strip himself of himself and entrust himself totally to the Lord, *“to make room for the One who is our hope”, who “gives us his Spirit, makes our hearts burn with the Scriptures, comforts us with the food of the Eucharist.”*

This year’s Feast falls on the Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures: it is no coincidence that after the gift of the Stigmata, Francis comes down from La Verna and composes his praise to the Supreme Creator: he recognizes that everything is God’s, because everything comes from Him and returns to Him, Fr Massimo Fusarelli stressed, wishing everyone to recognize the work of the Lord and not be *“predators and murderers”*.

At the end of Mass, the Minister General congratulated Br. Cesare Vaiani on his 50 years of profession and six Polish friars who are celebrating their 25th anniversary of profession.

As happens every day in the sanctuary, at 3.00 p.m. None-the Ninth Hour was recited and then the procession went to the Chapel of the Stigmata.

[Download the homily of 16 September](#)

[Download the homily of 17 September](#)

[Download the Stigmata Prayer](#)

See [all photos on Flickr](#)



## Feast of Canticle 2025

The 61st edition was celebrated in San Damiano  
in the Year of the VIII Centenary



WWW.OFM.ORG



On the 21st September, 2025, the 61st “Feast of Songs” took place in the Sanctuary of San Damiano, a particularly significant edition because it was within the framework of the VIII Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures.

The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, presided over the Eucharistic celebration, which was followed, in the Garden of Canticle, by the re-enactment of the composition of the Canticle of St. Francis and its singing performance by the Porziuncola Choir.

The event brought together the faithful, friars and pilgrims to give thanks with Francis of As-

sisi to the Lord through the praise of creatures, in the same church of San Damiano where the Saint composed the verses in the winter between 1224 and 1225. As the Letter for the Eighth Centenary recalls, “*the Canticle is a synthesis of the way in which Francis saw reality, and together we still want to sing it with joy of spirit!*”

Throughout the day, moments of prayer, meditation and song were proposed, emphasizing how Francis’ praise embraces the whole of creation and invites each person to live reconciliation with God, with their sisters and brothers and with creation. The commemorative Letter reminds us that “*everything is connected, everything is related: everything is Trinitarian*” and invites us to meditate also on the deepest passage of the Canticle: “*Praised be you, my Lord, through our sister bodily death*”.

An opportunity for faith and reconciliation that relaunched the ever-present message of universal fraternity and care for our common home.

To deepen the spiritual and pastoral significance of the event, the [Letter for the VIII Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures](#) is available.

See [all photos on Flickr](#)



## New meeting of the Definitors of the Iberian Peninsula In view of the union of the Provinces



WWW.OFM.ORG



On September 11 and 12 of this year, in accordance with the conclusions of the [meeting of the Definitors](#) of the four Franciscan Provinces of the Iberian Peninsula (Saints Martyrs of Morocco in Portugal, and Our Lady of Arántzazu, Santiago de Compostela, and the Immaculate Conception in Spain), held in Lisbon in January 2025, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. Cesare Vaiani, and by the Delegate of the Minister General, Br. Sergiusz Baldyga, the new Definitors of these Provinces met after their respective Provincial Chapters, with the

aim of taking on and advancing the process of union of the Provinces, agreed upon at the Lisbon meeting.

In accordance with what was agreed and expressed in the Lisbon document, the meeting was held in a “synodal style,” beginning with the discovery of the common elements that unite us at different levels (spiritual, affective, charismatic, emotional) with the friars of the other Entities in view of the union/federation; and also trying to recognize possible resistance to it and the challenges it presents. We also

discussed and proposed initiatives that would allow us to involve all the friars in the key of fraternal life in mission.

Finally, we proposed concrete modalities and indications to continue advancing in the process of union, as well as a calendar-agenda for different levels of encounter that would allow us to walk toward a common goal of union that could revitalize Franciscanism in the Iberian Peninsula. Beyond everything that was discussed and agreed upon, it is worth noting the excellent fraternal atmosphere in which the meeting took place, and the freedom and sincerity with which all the brothers were able to express themselves when addressing the proposed topics.

Such sincerity and fraternal cordiality are the best guarantee of a fruitful and truly revitalizing process for our entities and our Franciscan life. We entrust ourselves to the Spirit of the Lord and his holy work on this journey.

*Br. Miguel de la Mata, OFM*

### Tempo Forte



#### *Communiqué Tempo Forte*



Communiqué of the General Definitory relating to Tempo Forte for July 2025.

Download the pdf:  
[Italiano](#) - [English](#) - [Español](#)

## Franciscan Centenaries



## International Photo Exhibition

### *The Canticle of the Creatures - VIII Centenary of the composition of the Canticle*



WWW.OFM.ORG

On the 31st August, 2025, the international photographic exhibition “*The Canticle of the Creatures*” was inaugurated in Assisi, at Palazzo Monte Frumentario, made available by the City of Assisi, which tells in images the famous canticle written by Francis of Assisi in 1225. It is a project promoted by the Order of Friars Minor - OFM Fraternitas Foundation in collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy of the Pontifical *University Antonianum*, by the Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the Friars Minor of Italy and Albania and carried out by Exhibit Around APS, the beating heart of the prestigious international photography festival “*Trieste Photo Days*”.

In all, more than 6 thousand photographers joined the call for the Canticle of the Creatures project (which was amongst the three most crowded in the history of “*Trieste Photos Days*”), more than 100 works selected from the best, which are part of the exhibition. To make the initiative even more prestigious, the participation of the photographer Dario De Dominicis, a professional of great depth, recognized all over the world for his great impact in the field of documentary photography. With St. Francis of Assisi we praise the Most High through

the language of photography, highlighting both the aesthetic elements of beauty and the virtues of each element of creation, but also the critical factors of the abuse perpetrated on them, at the moment when man, within the relationships between creatures, has assumed positions of domination.

The exhibition is divided by themes, according to the scheme proposed by the Canticle itself, into nine sections: Almighty Almighty, Good Lord; Brother Sun; Sister moon and the stars; Brother Wind is in the air and cloudy and serene and in all weather; Sister Water Brother Fire; our Sister, Mother Earth; Those who forgive; Our Sister corporal Death.

The inauguration was attended by: the Mayor of Assisi Valter Stoppini, the Deputy Mayor Veronica Cavallucci, Br. Francesco Zecca OFM, head of the project, Br. Antonino Clemenza OFM, scientific curator, Stefano Ambroset, president of the Exhibit Around APS association that curated the exhibition, Dario De Dominicis, photographer of international importance, and Br. Alessandro Brustenghi OFM, who sang the Lauds and the Canticle of the Creatures, accompanied by Br. David.



## Celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Song in Chile

*At the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso*



WWW.OFM.ORG

On Wednesday, the 27th August 2025, the 800th anniversary of the Canticle of the Creatures of St. Francis was celebrated at the Fray Luis Olivares Molina OFM Library of the Ecclesiastical Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso (PUCV) in Chile.

The event, which was attended by University Professors, students and members of the Franciscan fraternity, aimed to highlight the spiritual, cultural and academic significance of this universal hymn to creation.



Also present was the Vice-Grand Chancellor of the PUCV, Br. Cristián Eichin Molina OFM, who in his speech stressed that the Canticle “reminds us that the Catholic university is a place where science and faith dialogue, where the contemplation of creation inspires an integral education committed to the care of the common home.”

Returning to St. Bonaventure and his Itinerary from the Mind to God, he highlighted how the first steps of this spiritual path pass through recognizing God in the vestiges of creation: creatures as mirrors of the Creator, senses and understanding as paths to ultimate truth, and order and numbers as traces that reveal divine harmony in the universe. This vision, he pointed out, offers university life a framework that integrates scientific research with contemplation and spirituality.

One of the central moments was the presentation of the icon of the Canticle of the Creatures, the work of the theologian and iconographer

Francisco Aguirre, professor of the faculty of theology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. This icon was painted with the traditional technique of egg and gold leaf painting typical of Byzantine icons. It integrates elements of the Franciscan tradition, particularly the image of St. Francis of Assisi that shows his wounds and the environment that refers to the song of the creatures. In addition, in a very lucid way it dialogues with culture and art in Chile: the small blue bird on the shoulder of San Francisco recalls a work by Violeta Parra, a famous Chilean artist.

Br. Julio Campos, OFM, shared a reflection from the charism of the content of the Canticle. In his presentation, Br Julio delved into the vital context in which the Canticle was born: the loneliness, illness and contemplative experience of St. Francis in San Damiano around 1225, when he transformed suffering into a source of praise.

He explained that the canticle is the fruit of the original experience of God as love, which is expressed in a language of fraternity and in a new way of inhabiting the world. He underlined the Franciscan vision of the human being as a pilgrim in search of the face of God, whose prayer and contemplation lead to praise and restitution of the love received. «The Canticle,» he said, «is light in the midst of suffering, a revelation that turns darkness into hymn and fragility into fraternity.»

The aesthetic and spiritual dimension was completed with the musical performance of the Soloists of the PUCV Chamber Orchestra, who offered a repertoire of classical pieces that included the Divertimento in F major, K. 138: I. Allegro by W. A. Mozart, Gabriel's Oboe by Ennio Morricone and La Primavera by Antonio Vivaldi.

The event was part of the collaboration between the PUCV, the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and the Franciscan Fraternity of Valparaíso, reinforcing the importance of Franciscan spirituality in the academic and cultural life of the local Church.

The event concluded with a call to continue deepening the spirituality of care, contemplation and universal fraternity, so necessary in the current context of socio-environmental crisis.

## News from the Entities



## Opening of the Season of Creation 2025 in Vietnam

*A Call to Action to Protect Our “Common Home”*



WWW.OFM.ORG



On August 31st in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, the Season of Creation 2025 officially opened at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Saigon. The event, organized by the Province of St. Francis of Assisi in Vietnam, was held under the theme “Protecting Creation and Taking Action,” taking place during the Jubilee Year of Hope and commemorating the 10th anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

The event was attended by many ecclesiastical dignitaries, including Archbishop Joseph Nguyễn Năng of Saigon; Bishop Joseph Trần Văn Toàn of Long Xuyên; along with priests, religious men and women, and a large number of the faithful.

An environmental exhibition captured the community’s attention. The exhibit displayed works of art celebrating the beauty of nature, from paintings to sculptures, inspired by

St. Francis of Assisi’s “Canticle of Brother Sun.” Additionally, booths from Caritas Đà Lạt, Caritas Phan Thiết, and recycling companies like Upgreen Vietnam and Sao Nam, showcased green solutions, emphasizing the deep connection between humanity and nature.

The highlight of the program was a specialized seminar titled “Protecting Creation and Taking Action”. Speakers engaged in a dialogue, offering diverse perspectives from Franciscan spirituality and ecological theology to practical solutions. These discussions not only awakened a spirit of ecological conversion but also affirmed a shared determination to transform Pope Francis’s appeals into concrete actions.

Archbishop Joseph Nguyễn Năng celebrated a Mass for the protection of the environment. In his homily, Bishop Joseph Trần Văn Toàn emphasized,

“We need to embark on a journey of ecological conversion, living humbly and respecting the universe as a gift of God’s infinite love.”

The program was further enriched with real-life testimonies about river cleanup projects, sustainable garden models, and activities supporting the poor. Musical performances and inspirational videos also reinforced the message of dedication and unity.

The opening of the Season of Creation 2025 was more than just a ceremony; it was a powerful reminder of each individual’s role in safeguarding our planet. The event concluded with a prayer and the hymn *Laudato Si’*, reaffirming that caring for the Earth is the path to building a just and sustainable future for all.

*With the contribution of OFM Vietnam*

# LIFE *in the Order*



## Solemn professions

6th September, Prov. Saints Cyril and Methodius (Croatia):

**Br. Petar Penić**



## Priestly Ordinations

14th September, Prov. St Francis (Vietnam):  
Br. Peter (Văn Lê) Bùì

13th September, Prov. The Holy Name of Jesus (Brazil):  
Br. Carlos Antônio Pereira

5th September, Prov. Sacred Heart of Jesus (Italy):  
Br. Marco Sibilio

Baumeister, Prov. St. Elizabeth (Germany)

† 30th August: Br. Brendan (Brendan Peter) Scully, Province of Ireland

† 29th August: Br. Eduardo (Eduardus Bernardus Maria) Metz, Prov. The Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands)

† 23rd July: Br. Heldmar (Jozef) Jehaes, Prov. The Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Belgium)

*Information received from the General Secretariat*



## Deceased Brothers

† 8th September: Br. Marcel Cavnac, Prov. Blessed John Duns Scotus (France)

† 8th September: Br. Marino (Alfredo) Festa, Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Italy)

† 7th September: Br. Samuel Nasada, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)

† 4th September: Br. Theofried (Theodor)





## OFS Australia: Fraternal and pastoral visit 9th-12th September 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG



The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) in Australia has 509 members, of whom 263 are active and 246 less active due to age and great distances. They are distributed in 22 active Fraternities, among the 48 canonically erected Fraternities, grouped in 4 regions: New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. This national fraternity received the fraternal and pastoral visit from Tibor Kauser, Minister General of the OFS, and Br. Stefan Acatrinei OFMConv, representative of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS), from the 9th to 12th September 2025.

The Visitors arrived on the evening of Monday the 8th September at the Mary MacKillop Spirituality Centre, in Baulkham Hills (Sydney). On Tuesday, the 9th September, after the Eucharistic celebration at 8:30 a.m., they met with the National Council and defined the programme of the Visit. At 11.30 a.m. they had the opportunity to meet H.E. Msgr. Vincent Long

Van Nguyen OFMConv, Bishop of Parramatta, who emphasized the importance and value of the OFS Fraternities in his Diocese, especially in such a secularized society. Amongst the various topics discussed, he also recalled the influence of his father, a secular Franciscan, on his vocation. In the afternoon, at 2:00 p.m., the meeting with the Council resumed with the presentation of the report on the activities carried out and a reflection on the future of the national fraternity. The prayer of Vespers, at 5.45 pm, concluded the day.

On Wednesday morning, at 10:00 a.m., the dialogue with the National Council continued regarding the apostolate and missionary activities of the National Fraternity. In the afternoon, the documents and the archive of the OFS were verified. At 6:00 p.m., the Visitors met with the local Fraternity of St. Francis of Leichhardt (Sydney), which shared with them the program of monthly meetings. Thursday morning was dedicated to the pilgrimage to the

tomb of St. Mary MacKillop, the only canonized Australian saint; in the afternoon a meeting was held via Zoom with the members of the various local fraternities scattered throughout the country.

On Friday morning there was a meeting with the Regional Spiritual Assistants, who shared the joys and hardships of their service. The greatest difficulty is represented by the closure of the friaries, due to the decrease in the number of friars, and by the great distances to be covered to reach the local Fraternities. On the same morning, the Regional Ministers met with the Visitors, presenting their Fraternities and ongoing activities. At 11.30 a.m., the Visitors shared the conclusions of the Visit with the National Council.

The last act of the Visit was the meeting with the Major Superiors: Br. Robert Stewart OFM-Cap, Minister Provincial; Br. Philip Miscamble OFM, Minister Provincial; Br. David Francis Blowey OFMConv, Provincial Delegate. Since it was desired that the Major Superiors could also participate in the dinner with the Chapter members and experience a moment of Fraternity, a meeting was held at 5:00 p.m., during the Chapter break. At the end, OFS Minister General Tibor Kauser and Br. Stefan Acatrinei thanked the Major Superiors for the spiritual and pastoral care offered to the OFS in Australia.



## Franciscan Bookmark

### Antonino Fantosati, un francescano in Cina (1842-1900)

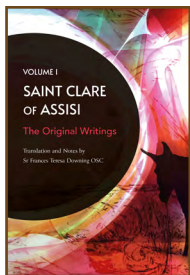


Erica Cecchetti

Prefazione di Br. Giuseppe Buffon, OFM  
Carocci editore

### Saint Clare of Assisi Volume 1.

The Original Writings



Foreword by Br Murray  
Bodo OFM  
Franciscan Publishing

### In carne e ossa:

Le virtù teologali e i consigli evangelici vissuti da chi  
ha incontrato Cristo



Br. Manuel Valenzisi OFM  
Pubblicazione indipendente

## OFS, National Elective Chapter in Slovakia

Melice-Lieskove, 4th-7th September 2025



WWW.OFM.ORG



From the 4th to 7th September 2025, the National Elective Chapter of the OFS of Slovakia was held at the convent of the Sestry Františkánky Premenenia Pána (The Franciscan Sisters of the Transfiguration) in the village of Melice-Lieskove. The Chapter was presided over by Dina Shabalina, OFS, CIOFS Presidency Councilor, delegated by Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, and witnessed by Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM, representative of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS).

The opening Mass was celebrated on Thursday afternoon by the National Assistant Br. Josef Konec, OFM Cap, and followed by the meeting of the outgoing Council and the intervention of Dina on “Service Leadership” and Br. Pedro entitled “What does it mean to be a member of the OFS in the contemporary world”.

On Friday, the 5th September, other Capitulars and another national assistant, Br. Róbert Jozef Chabada, OFM, arrived: a total of 27 Capitulars plus 5 observers. This day was dedicated to the speakers of the National Minister and the Treasurer; Comments and approval followed later.

The participants decided to discuss together the proposals regarding the direction that the OFS in Slovakia can take to better revive its identity as a secular Order committed to living the Gospel today.

Saturday morning was dedicated to the election of the new National Council: Damián Berec was re-elected National Minister and Lucia Spodniaková International Councilor. After the election of the new National Council, the opportunity arose to implement what had been recommended during the pastoral visit and for some

reasons still pending, namely the formation of the Conference of the National Spiritual Assistant in Slovakia. Br. Stanislav Rok, OFMConv, was unanimously appointed as rotating President for a period of three years, and Br. Róbert Jozef Chabada, OFM, as Secretary of the CAS of Slovakia.

In the afternoon, the work of the groups was carried out followed by the presentations, and then concluded the day with the celebration of the Mass - in which the new Council was installed - presided over by the National Assistant Br. Stanislav Rok, OFMConv and concelebrated by the other National Assistants already mentioned, Br. Róbert and Br. Josef, together with Br. Pedro.

On Sunday morning, the concluding Mass was presided over by Br. Róbert, who reminded the Secular Franciscans of the need to put Christ at the center of their life, vocation and mission, and to dedicate themselves totally to the service of God with all their heart.

After the Eucharistic celebration, the Chapter members went to the Chapter Hall to listen to the speech of the newly elected National Minister and reflect together on key topics for the next three years, to approve the conclusions and resolutions of the Chapter, which ended with a fraternal agape followed by the farewell to the Chapter members.

## OFS, National Elective Chapter in New Zealand *Auckland, September 2-8, 2025*



WWW.OFM.ORG

The National Elective Chapter of the OFS of New Zealand took place September 2-8, 2025, at the “St. Francis Retreat Center” in Auckland.

The capitulars were very pleased to receive the Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, who presided over the Chapter, and the presence of Br. Stefan Acatrinei,

OFMConv, representing the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS), who testified at the Chapter.

During the elective session, the capitulars elected the new OFS National Council: Shirley McGinley is the National Minister and Paul Hitchfield is the International Councillor.

The national fraternity of the OFS in New Zealand is a canonically erected fraternity; despite its challenges, it continues to be a very active fraternity and involved in the affairs of the Church and society, testifying to the Franciscan charism with zeal, enthusiasm, determination and dedication.





## 26<sup>th</sup> Mariological Congress

*Jubilee and Synodality: a Church with a Marian face and praxis*



WWW.OFM.ORG



Congress you have asked yourselves whether a Church with a Marian face is a remnant of the past or a prophecy of the future, capable of shaking minds and hearts from the habit and regret of a “Christian society” that no longer exists. A Church with a Marian heart preserves and understands ever better the hierarchy of the truths of faith, integrating reason and affection, body and soul, universal and local, person and community, humanity and cosmos.”

The Holy Father urged to renew Marian piety and practice “oriented to the service of hope and consolation”, inviting everyone to start again by listening to the Word and to walk together, as brothers and sisters.

At the end of the Congress, the International Prize “Mary, the way of peace between cultures” was awarded, enhancing the contribution of the arts and music in the dialogue between peoples.

With a grateful heart, the Franciscan Family gives thanks for this cenacle of thought and prayer, an example of synodality and communion in the spirit of the Mother of the Lord, “who never ceases to open doors, build bridges, tear down walls and help humanity to live in peace in the harmony of diversity”.

See [all photos on Flickr](#)

The 26th International Marian Mariological Congress was held from the 3rd to 6th September 2025 at the Antonianum Auditorium in Rome on the theme «Jubilee and Synodality: a Church with a Marian face and praxis». This meeting, promoted by the Pontifical Academia Mariana Internationalis (PAMI), brought together scholars, religious, lay people and representatives of Mariological societies from all over the world, called to reflect together on the synodal and prophetic vocation of the Church, inspired by the model of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The congress opened with the prayers and greetings of the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and the President of PAMI, Br. Stefano Cecchin. Amongst the topics discussed: «Mary model of the synodal

Church» (Card. Mario Grech), «The Marian face of the Church» (Msgr. Antonio Staglianò) and «The Marian mysticism of Pope Francis and popular pastoral care» (Prof. Lúcia Pedrosa de Pádua).

Dialogue tables have been set up in several languages, promoting a true fraternity between cultures and traditions, following the style of Franciscan dialogue. Moments of pilgrimage, prayer, meetings in the Basilica of St. Mary Major and in the Vatican infused the grace of shared spiritual experience.

The culminating moment of the Congress was the audience with Pope Leo XIV, who addressed words of light and consolation to those present: “The Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, teaches us to be the holy people of God... In this

## Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal to Br. Magdy Helmy, OFM For his service to the Church in Libya



WWW.OFM.ORG



As a sign of gratitude for the pastoral and institutional service rendered to the Church in Libya, the Holy Father Leo XIV granted Br. Magdy Helmy, OFM, the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal. The communication was transmitted by the Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, Msgr. George Bugeja, OFM, with a letter registered on the 23rd July 2025 (Prot. No. 07/2025).

The honour reportedly recognizes Br. Magdy's commitment to pastoral ministry and the trust established over the years both with Msgr. Gio-

vanni Martinelli, predecessor of the current Vicar, and with Msgr. Bugeja himself. The award also enhances Br. Magdy's collaboration with the Apostolic Nunciature and the Secretariat of State, in particular in the preparation in Arabic of the documentation requested by the local government authorities.

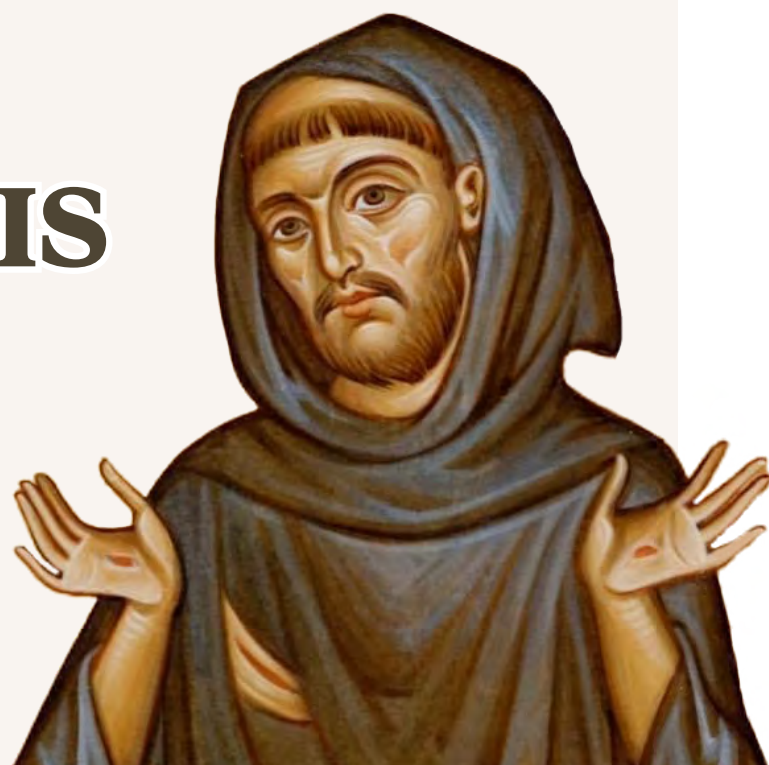
The official document and the medal arrived at the Apostolic Nunciature in Malta and were delivered in August. *"I am writing with great satisfaction to inform you that the Holy Father Leo XIV has granted the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal to Br. Magdy Helmy, OFM, for the commitment and service given to this missionary church in Libya..."*, reads the official letter of Mgr. George Bugeja, OFM.

What is the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal

The *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal is a Pontifical decoration, instituted by Leo XIII in 1888 on the occasion of his priestly jubilee, conferred on lay people and clerics for prolonged and exceptional service to the Church or to the Roman Pontiff.

## ST. FRANCIS Feast

Send a photograph of the Feast of St. Francis that you will celebrate to [com-gen@ofm.org](mailto:com-gen@ofm.org) by 5 October: they will be published on Fraternitas and on the Order's social networks. Remember to write the friary or fraternity, the Entity and the country in which it was made.





### Flood emergency in Pakistan *Fundraising for affected populations*



WWW.OFM.ORG

Between August and September 2025, the Punjab region of Pakistan suffered one of the worst floods in its history. In this territory where rivers are an element of identity (the word Punjab itself derives from the Persian Panj-āb, “five rivers”) and a source of livelihood for millions of inhabitants, water cyclically also proves to be the main source of risk. Record monsoon rains and releases from dams across the border have caused three of the five main rivers that cross the territory, the Ravi, the Sutlej and the Chenab, to overflow, devastating the vast areas that live on agriculture around their banks.

Over 2000 villages have been completely submerged and more than 2 million people have been forced to leave their homes, while the victims are counted in the dozens. More than 1.05 million acres of farmland have been destroyed, causing incalculable damage to vital crops such as rice, maize, cotton and sugarcane. The economic damage is very serious, with entire communities deprived of their livelihoods, while the risk of epidemics and malnutrition grows every day. The Order of Friars Minor is present in Pakistan with the Autonomous Custody of St. John the Baptist,

which has over 60 friars distributed between Karachi and Lahore. The Friars Minor point out the seriousness of the situation and their commitment to provide concrete answers to families who have lost all forms of livelihood and to people in need of medical care, doing everything possible to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

Local communities need food assistance, drinking water, basic non-food items (cooking utensils, hygiene kits), health care and safeguarding the livelihoods still present. For this reason, they have launched an emergency project that aims to reduce the suffering of a large number of people.

The project aims to distribute food parcels and basic necessities to 1,000 families and to establish medical camps for the benefit of about 500 individuals in need of primary and urgent care.

To support the work of the Friars Minor in favor of the victims of the flood, the OFM Fraternitas Foundation has started a fundraiser: [click here to offer your help](#).



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

**OFM**

Ordo Fratrum Minorum  
© 2025 All rights reserved