

**Solemnity of St. Francis  
 of Assisi 2025**

*From the Canticle to the Transit*



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On the 4<sup>th</sup> October, as the Franciscan Family, we celebrated St. Francis of Assisi in the context of the VIII Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures and on the way to the Centenary of the *Transitus* of 2026. St. Francis lived the Gospel “*sine glossa*”, was called by Christ to “repair” His Church, embraced lepers and chose “Our Lady Poverty” by stripping himself of everything. When the Lord gave him brothers, he began to live in fraternity at the Portiuncula, inviting those who joined him to follow Christ in obedience, without anything of their own and in chastity, whose life and rule was approved by the “Lord Pope”. At the end of his life he received



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the gift of the stigmata and, approaching death, he invited people to sing praises to the Most High and to all creation.

In this spirit, at the Portiuncula, Br. Francesco Iello, Custos of the Holy Land, began the celebrations with the Triduum inspired by the Cantic of the Creatures. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the Memory of the *Transitus* was celebrated: in the morning, the “Silver Rose 2025 – Br. Jacopa” award was presented to Mrs. Adele Previtali, originally from Sulmona, in Abruzzo – a region that this year will offer the oil destined to fuel the votive lamp on the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi.

Afterwards, the solemn Eucharistic celebration in the *Transitus* was presided over by Br. Francesco Piloni, Minister Provincial of the Friars Minor of Umbria and Sardinia. In the evening, the civil and religious authorities of Abruzzo and Umbria joined the First Vespers, presided over by Msgr. Emidio

Cipollone, with the participation of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime and the greeting of the Minister General of the OFM, Br. Massimo Fusarelli.

The night was illuminated with the Vigil at Our Lady of the Angels-*Santa Maria degli Angeli*, presided over by the Minister General of the Capuchin Friars Minor, Br. Roberto Genuin.

On the 4th October, the Basilicas of Assisi celebrated the feast of the Patron Saint of Italy with various activities.

In the General Curia of the OFM, the triduum in preparation for the Solemnity of St. Francis and the *Transitus* was presided over by Br. Cesare Vaiani, General Definitor and member of the Committee of the Franciscan Family for the VIII Franciscan Centenary. The celebration on the 4<sup>th</sup> October was presided over by Br. Benjamin Earl, OP, Procurator General of the Order of Preachers.

## General Curia Agenda



☑ On the 8th and 9th October, 2025 Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will participate in the Jubilee of Consecrated Life at the Vatican. From the 13th to the 17th he will be in Angola for the Chapter and the canonical erection of the dependent Custody of the Immaculate Mother of God. From the 18th to 24th October he will be in South Africa for a fraternal visit to the Province of Our Lady Queen of Peace.

☑ From the 9th-13th October, Br. John Wong, Definitor General, will be in Manila (Philippines) for a post-Chapter visit to the Province of St Peter Baptis. From the 13th to the 18th he will be in Tagaytay together with Br. Taucen Girsang (Deputy Director of the JPIC Office) to participate in the Assembly of the Franciscan Network of Asia for Peace and Integral Ecology, of which the Entities of the Franciscan Conference of Asia and Oceania (FCAO) are members. On the 20th and 21st October he will be in Singapore for the ongoing formation meeting of the Guardians of the Custody of St. Anthony (Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei), with the participation of the Guardians of the Province of St. Anthony of Padua (Philippines).

☑ From the 9th to 12th October Br. Fabio César Gomes, Assistant General pro Monialibus, will be in Spain at the El Palancar convent for the meeting of the Prayer and Devotion Commission, which will also be attended by Br. Hieronimus d. Rupa (Assistant Secretary General for Formation and Studies). From the 13th

to the 25th, Br. Fabio will visit some monasteries in the United States and will participate in the Assembly of the Holy Name Federation of the Poor Clare Sisters in Garrison (NY).

☑ Up until the 10th October, Br. Cesare Vaiani will be in Lisbon (Portugal) to participate in the meeting of the Southern European Conference (CEM).

☑ From October the 13th to 16th, Br. Cesar Külkamp, General Definitor, will be in Luanda (Angola) for the Chapter of the Foundation of the Immaculate Mother of God and the erection of the new Custody.

☑ From the 13th –20th October, Br. Cesar and Br. Joaquín A. Echeverry Hincapié, General Definitor, together with Br. Francisco Gomez Vargas (Secretary General for Evangelization) and Br. Dennis Tayo (General Animator for the Missions), will participate in Guatemala in the meeting of the New Forms of Evangelization and Work with the ancestral peoples of UCLAF (Union of Latin American Franciscan Conferences). Later, in Zacualpa, they will meet the brothers who work with the indigenous peoples.

☑ From the 20th to 23rd October, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General, will participate in the meeting of the Ministers and Custodes of the Franciscan Transalpine Conference (COTAF) to be held in z’Hertogenbosch (Netherlands).

## Government of the Order



## Reflections by Br. Massimo

### September 2025



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On the 21st September, at San Damiano, I participated in the celebration of the centenary of the Canticum of the Creatures. Standing before the Crucifix that spoke to Francis, I recalled that *“the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are inseparable.”* As I spoke those words, my heart was heavy thinking of Gaza, Ukraine, and the many places where today only the cry of pain resounds.

Francis composed the Canticum in the autumn of 1225, blind and ill, yet capable of transforming his frailty into universal praise. Today, faced with images of war that parade across our screens, we risk instead a blindness of the heart, a numbness to evil, a complicit silence. We seem to stand mute before logics of extermination that should make us cry out in horror.

*“Praised be you, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of you”* - this verse of the Canticum, added by Francis during a conflict between the bishop and the mayor of Assisi, sounds today like a provocation. Forgiveness is not an escape from reality, but recognition that only through reconciliation can we find pathways to integral peace.

But how can we speak of forgiveness while too many children die under bombs? How can we sing “Brother Sun, Sister Moon” while the earth

is bloodstained and witnesses so many people fleeing their homeland? Perhaps here lies the hardest lesson the Lord offers us: conversion cannot be merely personal, it must become social, political, prophetic.

The encyclical *Laudato Si’* has taught us that everything is connected. Today’s wars are not separate from the ecological crisis, from inequality, from the economy that kills. The logic that destroys our common home is the same that destroys peoples. Like the ancient prophets, we are called to denounce «those who trample upon the poor,» even when the poor is an entire people under siege.

The shame we feel in the face of our silence must become a starting point, not a destination. Francis saw his experience of frailty transformed into the beginning of conversion and compassion. We can transform our helpless pain into active witness, into words that break silence, into gestures that sow reconciliation.

The Canticum teaches us a *«grammar of relationships»*: everything is brother, everything is sister. Even those we consider enemies today. This is not naivety, but Gospel radicalism that alone can break the logics of death.

San Damiano sends us back into the world with the mandate to *“repair our common home.”* We cannot do this while ignoring the wounds that war inflicts on this home. The peace that Francis sang is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. In fact, justice today demands that we do not remain silent, that we do not look the other way, that we become seeds of peace and hope even when all seems lost.

The Lord is teaching us that our time calls for the same boldness as Francis: to transform suffering into praise, pain into prophecy, silence into words that liberate. *Laudato si’, mi’ Signore- Praised be, O my Lord-* even through the trial that purifies and converts us.



## Chapter of the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Río de La Plata Córdoba – Argentina, 15th-25th September, 2025



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- Provincial Minister: Br. Emilio Luis Andrada, OFM
- Provincial Vicar: Br. Gerardo Daniel Vogel, OFM
- Provincial Definitors: Br. Sergio Horacio Carballo, OFM; Br. Marcelino Aquino Correa, OFM; Br. Diego Omar Figueroa, OFM; Br. Tomás Javier Acosta, OFM.

From the 15th-25th September, 2025, the friars of the Franciscan Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Río de La Plata, present in Argentina and Paraguay, celebrated the Elective Provincial Chapter in San Antonio de Arredondo, province of Córdoba – Argentina. The Chapter was inspired by the motto “Enlightened by hope, let us serve and

adore the Lord God, with a clean heart and a pure mind”, and the cross-cutting themes were care, interculturality and synodality. The participation of ten lay men and women and two nuns, in the first moment, who contributed their view from their state of life, stands out. In a second moment, the friars elected the new Provincial Government, which was formed as follows:

In a third moment, the friars reflected on and voted on the 2026-2028 Guidelines, which will mark the Life and Mission of the friars.

*Br. Diego Omar Figueroa, OFM -  
Provincial Secretary*

## Elective Chapter of the Missionary Province of San Antonio in Bolivia Tarata, Cochabamba – 15th-19th September, 2025



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At the San José de Tarata House of Spirituality (Cochabamba) in Bolivia, the Elective Chapter of the San Antonio Missionary Province of the Friars Minor was held, with the motto: *«We praise the Creator as pilgrims of hope.»*

This motto included two events of great importance for the Church and for Franciscan spirituality in this year 2025: the Jubilee Year and the eighth centenary of the “Canticle of the Creatures” of St. Francis of Assisi.

Inspired by the letter of the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and by the report of the Visitor General, Br. Jorge Iván González Silva, the capitulars

elaborated a community project for the coming years, faithful to the spirit of St. Francis and attentive to the signs of our times.

During the Chapter, the new Provincial Government was also elected:

- Br. Raúl Bruno Vargas: Minister Provincial
- Br. Octavio Huanca Bernal: Vicar Provincial
- Definitors: Br. Eugenio Kantor Bulla; Br. Marcelo Garrón Romero; Br. Miguel Chuvirú Pesoa; Br. Abelino Yeguaori; Br. Julio Limbert Tejerina Ortiz.



In a spirit of gratitude and hope, the Franciscans of Bolivia reaffirmed their commitment to live and proclaim the Gospel with simplicity and joy, following the example of St. Francis of Assisi.

Enlightened by the spirit of the Chapter, the Brothers invite everyone – laity, young people, families, consecrated persons and priests – to weave together the bonds of a Church that listens, discerns and sets out. This shared journey seeks to make visible the dream of St. Francis and of the Church: a people of God united in faith, open to listening and community discernment. In

this journey, the Franciscan Brothers of the Province in Bolivia strongly reaffirm their option for the poor and marginalized, who occupy a privileged place at the heart of the Gospel and their mission. Following the poor and crucified Christ, they desire to be a close, supportive and committed presence where life cries out for justice, dignity and consolation. In the same way, they respond to the urgent call to care for the Common Home, assuming with responsibility the ecological crisis that affects the planet. Inspired by the “*Canticle of the Creatures*”, they desire to celebrate the whole of creation as a gift of God and commit themselves to protecting and safeguarding it as an essential part of their Franciscan vocation. In this way, encouraged by the example of St. Francis, the brothers wish to continue to be witnesses of peace, builders of fraternity and humble servants in the midst of the Bolivian people.

[Read the full text of the article on www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)

*Br. Kasper Kapron, OFM, Secretary of the Chapter*

## Chapters of Mats



### Chapter of Mats of the Province of the Holy Cross *Bosnia and Herzegovina, 15th September 2025*



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In the friary of St. Bonaventure in Visoko, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Chapter of Mats was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, during which the Province of the Holy Cross - Bosnia and Herzegovina also celebrated its patronal feast.

Traditionally, the Chapter of Mats is also an annual meeting of the Franciscans and an opportunity for the friars from all over the Province to meet: the friars exchange views, share their work expe-

riences and agree on common Provincial projects. Since this year the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross fell on a Sunday, the celebration was moved to Monday so that as many friars as possible could gather. This year there were over 80 friars from all over Bosnia Srebrena who gathered together. The Chapter began at 10:00 a.m. with Midday prayer, followed by a welcome address by Br. Zvonko Benković, Guardian of the Visoko friary. The Minister Provincial of Bosnia Srebrena, Br.

Zdravko Dadić, also greeted all the friars, followed by the lecture entitled “Building universal fraternity - Eight hundred years of the Canticle of Brother Sun of St. Francis of Assisi” given by Br. Danijel Nikolić, master of clerics and editor-in-chief of the magazine “Svjetlo riječi” (*The Light of the Word*).

At 12 noon, in the church of the friary of St. Bonaventure, solemn Mass was celebrated, presided over by the Minister Provincial, Br. Zdravko. In his homily, he emphasized that the Cross as a sign of salvation and hope has always been at the center of the Franciscan charism and tradition. He also reminded the friars that *«the exaltation of Christ on the Cross was not an exaltation of strength or power, but an exaltation through service to the end. We too are called to this same exaltation: through service to our brothers and sisters, through service to the Church and through service to the people to which we belong»*.

The Minister Provincial also referred to the great Franciscan Jubilee - 800 years since St. Francis wrote his famous Canticle of the Creatures, in which the Cross of Francis’ life becomes a hymn of praise - and stressed that *“the wisdom of Francis-*

*can spirituality is to transform suffering into a hymn of praise and the cross into a song of gratitude.”*

Finally, he encouraged all the friars, saying: *“Brethren, we are called to be the light in the darkness, the salt that gives a pleasant taste, the leaven that instills hope in people’s hearts. We can only be faithful to the cross: the cross of St. Francis, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.»* After Mass, a joint photo session and lunch followed. After the communal lunch, in the afternoon the friars met again and continued the discussion begun on topical topics related to the life and work of the friars of Bosnia and Srebrena. The Minister Provincial recalled in a special way in prayer all the friars who had died in the last year, as well as the elderly and sick friars. He also presented the statistical data of the Province. In this regard, as of the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2025, the Province of the Holy Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a total of 282 friars; of these, 267 are friars with solemn profession, 264 priests and 3 lay brothers. In addition, there are 13 students, 2 novices, 2 postulants and 3 seminarians.

*Br. Danijel Nikolić, OFM*



## Animation of the Order

### Meeting of the Executive Commission for Missions and Evangelisation (CEME) Ávila, Spain, 23rd- 26th September, 2025



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From the 23rd to 26th September 2025, in the city of Ávila (Spain), in the friary of St Anthony of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the Franciscan Friars Minor, the Executive Commission for Missions and Evangelisation (CEME) of

the Order of Friars Minor met. During the working days, four central aspects were addressed:

- Implementation of the *Ratio Evangelizationis*: It was reported that the *Ratio* is in the publication phase. In addition, a methodological instrument for its implementation was organized, first with the members of the International Council for Mission and Evangelization (CIME) and, later, with each brother secretary of Mission and Evangelization of each entity.
- Preparation of the next International Council: A space was dedicated to the organization of the next meeting of the International Council on Mission and Evangelization, which will be held in Malta, from the 22nd to 26th March 2026.

- Work of the Commission of Parishes: Br. Pedro Botía Nogueiras, OFM, of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Spain, member of the Commission of Parishes, presented the structure elaborated on the document *Sent to Evangelize in Parishes in Fraternity and Ministry* (2009). This work is the result of the responses received from 40 Entities to the questionnaire sent for the update of the document. The new version is expected to be available by Easter next year.
- Contributions for the 2027 General Chapter: The new *Ratio Evangelizationis* will require some proposals to be presented at the 2027 General Chapter.

This meeting was a moment of fraternal discernment and renewed impetus for the Secretariat for the Missions and Evangelization of Friars Minor throughout the world. We express special thanks to the friars of the fraternity of the friary of St. Anthony, for having made us feel like a family and for their witness of fraternity at the service of youth and parish ministry.

# LIFE in the Order



## Solemn professions

*Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Vietnam):*

*17th September : Br. Dominic Dang, Br. Francis Xavier Do, Br.*

*Peter Hoang, Br. Dominic Huynh, Br. Joseph Nguyen, Br. Joseph Anthony Nguyen, Br. Peter Nguyen, Br. Joachim Pham, Br. Joseph Phan, Br. Peter Trinh, Br. Joseph Vu.*

*20th September: Br. Martine Nguyen.*



## Priestly Ordinations

*19th September, Custody of the Holy Land: Br. Noor Amash.*

*14th September, Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Vietnam):*

*Br. Joseph, Br. Joseph Bien, Br. Joseph Bui, Br. Peter Dinh, Br. Joseph Hoang, Br. Joseph Le, Br. Peter Le, Br. Dominic Tong.*

*Information received from the General Secretariat*



## Deceased Brothers

† 22nd September: Br. Altair Anacleto Lorenzetti, Prov. Immaculate Conception (Brazil).

† 19th September : Br. Gabriel Arango Trujillo, Prov. St. Paul the Apostle (Colombia); Br. Viegas André M'Puhua, Prov. St. Clare (Mozambique).

† 14th September: Br. Daniel Córdoba Ibarra, Prov. Sts. Francis and James (Mexico).

† 27th July: Br. Gaudêncio Sens, Prov. Immaculate Conception (Brazil).

† 22nd July: Br. Italo Maria Palleschi, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy).



Operetta of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish of the Immaculate Conception-City of Curitiba, Santa Catarina, Brazil



Assisillam  
Dindigul, India



Orden Franciscana Seglar de Santiago de Surco  
Lima Peru



Franziskaner Kloster  
Cologne, Germany



Convento di San Paolo  
Sarajevo, Croazia



Our Lady of Guadalupe Friary  
Prov de los Ss Francisco y Santiago  
Hebbronville, Texas, USA



Our Lady of Guadalupe Friary  
Prov de los Ss Francisco y Santiago  
Hebbronville, Texas, USA





Chiesa San Francesco d'Assisi  
Gallipoli provincia di Lecce, Italia



Santuario de Ntra. Sra. Santa Maria de Guadalupe  
Ciudad de Morelia, Michoacán de Ocampo, México



Monasterio de Santa Clara en Montenegro  
Quindío, Colombia, Prov San Pablo Apóstol



St Francis Friary  
Basen, India



The Church and the Monastery of St Francis  
Split, Croatia



Parroquia San Francisco de Asís, Juigalpa, Chontales,  
Prov Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe  
Nicaragua



Acquate di Lecco, frazione di Falghera  
Italia



Dharmodaya Seva Ashram  
Bellary, India



## Season of Creation in Kenya

### Nairobi, celebrations for the 800 years of the *Canticum* and the 10 years of *Laudato Si'*



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From 18th–20th September 2025, the General Office for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) participated in the “Season of Creation 2025” events in Nairobi, Kenya. These activities marked the 800th anniversary of *The Canticum of the Creatures* and 10 years since Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si'*. The events were organized by JPIC Franciscans Africa, led by Sr. Mary Wangari Sebastian LSSJ, and Br. Dr. Peter Mbaro of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

On 18th September, a significant meeting was held in JPIC Franciscans Africa Office, Nairobi, bringing together, in a spirit of fraternity and open listening, members of the Franciscan Family. Three key agreements emerged from this dialogue. First, there was unanimous recognition of the need for deeper collaboration among the various branches of the Franciscan Family, given their collective size and potential. Second, participants emphasized the importance of focusing on conflict resolution and mediation, especially in connection with environmental justice-issues that align closely with Franciscan values. Third, the group acknowledged the many networks that already exist within the Franciscan world and expressed a commitment to harnessing them for joint action and shared mission.

On the morning of Friday 19th September, some members of the JPIC Animation Committee namely Br. Taucen Girsang, Br. Jean Eric Mutabazi, and Sister Mary Francis Sebastian Wangare met with Rev. Prof. Br. Steven Mbugua, the Vice-chancellor of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Rev. Dr. Br. Peter Mbaro, the director of the Center for Social Justice and Ethics within the same university. The

point of this meeting was to cement the collaboration between the university and the JPIC office initiated in December 2024. On 19th September, an Interfaith Youth Forum was held at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa to celebrate two important anniversaries: 800 years of *The Canticum of the Creatures* by St. Francis of Assisi and 10 years of Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si'*. The event brought together about six hundred people among whom were students and young people from different backgrounds and faiths to reflect on peace, care for creation, and spiritual unity. The forum emphasized how Franciscan values are still very relevant today, especially during times of environmental and social crisis.

Speakers from Christian, Muslim, and Hindu traditions, along with Franciscan collaborators, shared inspiring messages about our shared duty to protect the Earth. They drew from sacred texts and teachings to highlight the importance of peace and ecological responsibility. Through stories, testimonies, and open dialogue, the forum encouraged understanding between faiths and inspired youth to take action for the planet.

On September 20, a powerful procession for environmental justice took place, with participants marching from the Animal Orphanage to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The event was a vivid display of collective action, with banners, platforms, and slogans calling for urgent environmental responsibility.

Participants delivered impassioned messages, urging that immediate and sustained action must be taken to protect our planet—our “common home.” Through their unified voices, they stressed the necessity of environmental care, highlighting the critical need for local and global commitment to conservation and sustainability.

With a mix of optimism and urgency, the procession served as a reminder that the time for change is now, and that together, we can create a more sustainable future for all.

[Read the full text of the article on www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)

Br. Taucen Girsang, OFM  
Vice-Director of JPIC General Office

## ESAC Formation of Formators course Harare, Zimbabwe, 8-19 September 2025



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In Harare, Zimbabwe, the English-Speaking Conference of Africa (ESAC) held its first gathering of formators since it was established as a new Conference. The formation course had nineteen participants of Franciscan brothers journeying in formation and three brothers from the Conference Secretariat for Formation and Studies. The course started on the 8th of September through till the 19th of September 2025. It comprised two intense weeks with different friars and a sister giving the brothers valuable input.

The first speaker was Br Solomon Mphela, OFM, from South Africa, who shared his reflections on Chapters 2 and 3 of our *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*. He reminded the participants that all the friars are formators and that they all are called to conversion, and that they should impart human conversion, moral conversion and religious conversion, underlining that everything starts with us.

The second speaker, Sr Isabel Nyasha Mandunguma, CPI, brought attention to the value of finances, starting with personal accountability. Her remarks were very down to earth. She put stress on stewardship, transparency, and accountability, which can help the friars to be true custodians of the finances entrusted to them.

The current Custos of Zimbabwe, Br Fanuel Magwidi, OFM, talked about the reality of Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults in Africa. The participants had the time to work on a current case study that helped all present to fully understand the role and importance of Safeguarding in the Church today.

The second week began with Br Darko Tepert, OFM, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, who talked about our charism. He shared the

importance of collaboration in formation, with a strong emphasis on the need for collaboration between Formation and Studies, Missions and Evangelisation, and JPIC, that should work together. He ended his contribution by giving some reflections on how to conduct fruitful interviews with the formees and how to prepare the reports with the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* guidelines in mind.

Taking advantage of technology and with the idea of the universality of the Order in mind, the participants had the opportunity to listen to Br Derrick Yap, OFM, the Custos of Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia. He shared his reflection on *Being Minors in the Order*, reminding the participants that Franciscanism relies on fraternity and minority, which help to overcome clericalism and individuality. This was a Zoom presentation, and the brothers appreciated a view on minority and fraternity from another continent.

The brothers who attended the course were greeted online by the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, and the Definitor General for Africa, Br Sipehele Gwanisheni, OFM, who shared with this mostly young group of friars three important aspects of formation:

Integral Formation: Human, Christian, and Charismatic Unity

The Importance of Personal and Fraternal Accompaniment

Careful Attention to Inculturation and Overcoming Clericalism

In general, the course was very fraternal, and the brothers were very accommodating and fully participated in the course, thanks also to the benefactors who made this valuable event possible and allowed them to share their experience of life in formation as friars.

The course concluded with all the brothers receiving a certificate for participating in the Formation of Formators course.

Download Minister General Message:  
[English](#) - [Italiano](#)





## News from the Entities

### The Immaculate Mother of God Foundation of Angola celebrates 35 years of mission *Quibala (Angola), 25 th September 2025*



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The Franciscan Foundation of the Immaculate Mother of God of Angola (FIMDA) celebrated 35 years of mission. The Franciscan presence in the country began on the 5th September 1990, when the first friars sent by the Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil arrived: Br. Plínio Gande da Silva, Br. José Zanchet and Br. Pedro Caron. They responded to the missionary call taken up at the 1988 Provincial Chapter, in line with the letter of the then Minister General, Br. John Vaughn, entitled *“Africa Calls Us: A New Presence of Our Order in Africa.”*



On the morning of Thursday, the 25th September, the Foundation solemnly celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for the 35 years of walking at the Fraternity of Santo António in Quibala, Angola. The celebration was presided over by Br. Marco Antonio dos Santos, Master of Novices, and was attended by members of the Foundation Council, friars on mission, novices and faithful of the fraternities. During the liturgy, the sending of the first friars was remembered with gratitude and the commitment to bear witness to evangelical simplicity at the service of the Angolan people was reaffirmed. In his reflection, Br. Ivair Bueno de Carvalho emphasized that celebrating this date *“means recognizing that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Franciscan charism is renewed every day, pushing us to follow our Lord Jesus Christ with a witness of minority and fraternity.”*

Currently, FIMDA has about 90 Angolan friars affiliated to the Province of the Immaculate Conception, but already recognized as an Entity with its own identity and inculturated in the local context.

The mission is carried out in seven fraternities distributed in three Angolan provinces and five cities. Among the 90 friars, 27 have already made their solemn profession in the Order (14 of them are priests). Another 51 are in the process of making their temporary profession, renewing their vows and completing their formation. The Foundation also supports nine novices in the introductory phase to Franciscan life. In addition to the Angolans, three Brazilian friars continue to collaborate in the mission: Br. Ivair Bueno de Carvalho, president of the Foundation; Br. André Luiz da Rocha Henriques, parish priest of the parish of St. Luke in Palanca; and Br. Marco Antonio dos Santos, Master of Novices.

Next month, FIMDA will take a new step. The Chapter of the Foundation will be held from the 13th to 15th October at the Fraternity of St. Francis of Assisi in Palanca. On the 16th October, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, will officially establish the Custody dependent on the Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil. The first Custos and his Council will be appointed by the Minister General, with the mission of leading the transition and consolidating the new structure. It is hoped that, in time, the Custody will reach sufficient maturity to become a future Province of the Order of Friars Minor in Angola. The celebration of the 35th anniversary is a sign of gratitude to God and to the Angolan people who welcomed the friars. The ongoing campaign for Franciscan Vocations and Missions, supported by benefactors from Brazil and Angola, continues to ensure the formation of new generations of friars and the strengthening of the mission. The Order entrusts the continuity of this history to the intercession of Our Lady of the Conception of Muxima, Patroness of Angola, and to the testimony of the Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi, so that the Franciscan charism can continue to flourish in the Angolan lands.

[Read the full text of the article on www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)

*Br. Rodrigo da Silva Santos and the Friars in the Season of the Missionary Year*

## 25th Anniversary of the Canonization of the Martyrs of China

*An event and a book to rediscover the story  
of Msgr. Antonino Fantosati, OFM*



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The 1st October 2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the canonization of the 120 Martyrs of China, including 29 Franciscans – Friars Minor, Franciscan Missionary of Mary Sisters, and 1 Franciscan Tertiary. The Franciscan fraternity and the ecclesial community solemnly celebrated the event at the convent of San Martino di Trevi (PG – Italy), the birthplace of Br. Antonino Fantosati, OFM, killed in Hengzhou in China on the 7th July, 1900 and still today an eloquent witness of evangelical courage and radical fidelity to Christ.

The solemn Eucharist (6.00 pm) has been presided over by H.E. Msgr. Renato Boccoardo, Archbishop of the Diocese of Spoleto-Norcia and former member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

*Antonino Fantosati, a Franciscan in China (1842-1900)*

The book *Antonino Fantosati, a Franciscan in China (1842-1900)*, by Erica Cecchetti, has just been published, with a preface by Br. Giuseppe Buffon, OFM, Professor of Church History at the Faculty of Theology of the PUA.

The volume reconstructs the role and contribution of Msgr. Fantosati during his long missionary experience in the Qing Empire, offering a historically documented reading of his personal and



spiritual life. Through a rich correspondence with European and Chinese interlocutors and thanks to in-depth research conducted in the main historical archives that preserve the most significant traces, the sinologist Erica Cecchetti gives a broad picture of the political, religious and cultural dynamics that marked China at the end of the nineteenth century.

The figure of the Umbrian Franciscan friar – killed during the Boxer Rebellion and canonized by John Paul II in 2000 – emerges as emblematic in the context of global relations at the time, on the threshold of the collapse of the ancient Chinese Empire. The book also dedicates specific space to the linguistic strategies adopted by the missionary in the exercise of his ministry, highlighting the social and cultural implications of the linguistic practices employed by foreign missionaries in China in the nineteenth century.

## Sixteen new entries to the Novitiate of Lubumbashi (DRC)

*Province of St. Benedict the African*



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During the Eucharistic celebration on the 20th September, 2025, in memory of Saints Andrew Kim, Paul Chong and companions, sixteen novices were admitted to the novitiate of “Our Lady of the Angels” in Lubumbashi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The canonical and official rite of entry into the novitiate, presided over by Br. Georges Misange, OFM, Minister of the Province of St. Benedict the African, took place in the presence of the formation team of the novitiate and some professed members.



## Franciscan Bookmark

### Il cantico della materia: percorsi francescani tra alchimia e scienze



A cura di Andrea Chiricheș e  
Donata Bulotta - Studi Francescani

### Selecciones de Franciscanismo N. 149 – Vol. LIII – Fasc. 1



Editorial ESPIGAS

Indeed, beginning with the reading of the day - the parable of the sower - the Minister Provincial, in his exhortation, emphasized several points, such as the generosity of those who sow widely, without calculations. God calls despite our fragility, our stories, our contexts, sometimes marked by the wounds of our country. Speaking of stones, thorns and the roadside, the Minister Provincial emphasized that these are all realities that can threaten the journey of novices: superficiality, discouragement, the temptation to close in on oneself, tribal divisions and the search for comfort. He then reminded them to cultivate a deep, grounded, free, and open heart, as well as patience and perseverance. He also recalled that the novitiate is a time of interior formation in which one must learn to pray, fraternal life, the spirit of poverty, love for the Gospel and openness to the poorest. In this way, the novice must be a sign of hope for the Church and society, becoming a seed of peace and reconciliation. After the ceremony, the sixteen novices, from different regions, and in particular those

who had completed the postulancy in Bukavu, the area occupied by the rebels, expressed their joy and expectations. Their journey to Lubumbashi was not easy, given the distance and the security situation in the country. During the shared meal, the Minister Provincial read a letter from the Minister General addressed to the novices, in which he invited them to: Deepen their personal relationship with the Lord through contemplative prayer, listening to the Word and Eucharistic Adoration. To let Christ speak to one's heart in solitude and silence. Gradually assume the vocational identity of the Friars Minor, following in the footsteps of Francis, "the Poor Man" who became last amongst the last. To live authentically in fraternity, experiencing communion, a visible sign of Trinitarian love. Be patient with others, welcoming in diversity, generous in forgiveness.

Embrace the simplicity of life that characterizes our charism.

*Br. Patient Ilunga, OFM, Master of Novices*

## Spiritual Exercises of the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Russia *Friary of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross*



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From the 15th-20th September, the friars of the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Russia met in the friary of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Novosibirsk for their annual Spiritual Exercises, preached by Br. Alfredo Fecondo (F.S.C.B.). During the Exercises the friars reflected and prayed about the themes found in the Cantic of Brother Sun. The Spiritual Exercises were truly a time of grace: the preaching was rich and engaging and will certainly bear much fruit in each of the friars. In addition, during this week, celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Stigmata of St. Francis, on the 17th September, the friars of the Foundation welcomed a "stone",



authenticated by the local bishop and set in a wooden cross, donated by the Guardian and the Fraternity of the Sanctuary of Monte della Verna: so that the presence of this relic in our midst. May the prayer and intercession of St. Francis sustain us on the journey and bring peace to hearts and to the whole world! The St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Russia reports directly to the Minister General and is currently composed of six friars: two Russians, three Italians and a Vietnamese. Let us pray that the Lord will give new local vocations and see the arrival of missionary friars from other Entities of the Order.



**OFS, National Elective Chapter in Poland**  
*September 24-27, 2025*



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The National Elective Chapter of the OFS in Poland was officially celebrated from September 24 to 27, 2025. Presided over by the CIOFS Presidency Councilor, Dina Shabalina, OFS, it was witnessed by Br. Tomàs Ginga Panzo Suva, OFM<sup>Cap</sup>, representing the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS).



The Chapter elected a new National Council; the National Minister is Emilija Nogaj, OFS, while the International Councilor is Slawomir Kowalski, OFS.

The capitulars expressed their gratitude to God for the time spent together and returned to

their local fraternities with joy and determination to work with the newly elected Council.

**OFS Lithuania, fraternal and pastoral visits**  
*18th - 21st September, 2025*



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The OFS National Fraternity of Lithuania received his fraternal and pastoral visits to different regions from the 18th - 21st September, 2025.

The CIOFS delegation was represented by Dina Shabalina, OFS, and Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM. The visitors began their formal visit with the celebration of Mass presided over by the local and regional Spiritual Assistant Br. Arūnas Peskaitis, OFM, followed by a fraternal meeting with brothers and sisters from

different local brotherhoods that make up the Vilnius region. In this region, the pastoral visitor met with the regional and local spiritual assistants: Br. Arūnas Peskaitis, OFM, Sr. Ingrida Kazlauskaite, CSSBVMI (Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary) and the other Regional Spiritual Assistant, Br. Juozapas Marija Zukauskas, OFM. The following day the visitors, together with the National Council and the National Spiritual Assistant Br. Antanas Grabnickis, OFM,

went to the Hill of Crosses in the Šiauliai–Panevėžys region, where he met other members of the Regional Council with their Regional Spiritual Assistant, Br. Paulius Vainikis, OFM.

They then moved to Kretinga where they were joined by the second National Spiritual Assistant, Br. Piotr Strocen OFMConv, and the permanent deacon, Reverend Nerijus Čapas, OFS, who is also a member of the National Council. The meeting continued in another region, in Klaipėda, where all the members of the OFS visited the parish of St. Bruno and the friars of the friars of the OFMConv. Afterwards, they all moved to the Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi, where they celebrated Mass, followed by another meeting with the brothers and sisters from the Telšiai

region and their Regional Spiritual Assistant, Br. Astijus Kungys, OFM. This Regional Council has raised some concerns about the entire proposal for restructuring the Regional levels of the SFO in Lithuania. This is an issue that requires continuous discussion and listening in order to arrive at appropriate solutions that do not overload the national level but rather facilitate communication and spiritual growth for all members.

The following day, the visitors and the National Council met with the Poor Clare Sisters with the aim of strengthening the bond with the Franciscan Family, especially to highlight the meaning of the common charism and the sense of belonging to the Franciscan Order in general.

The highlight of the visit was the meeting with the Bishop of the Diocese of Panevėžys, Reverend Mons. Linas Vodopjanovas, OFM, responsible for consecrated life at the Bishops' Conference of

Lithuania. The main objective of this meeting was to renew the commitment and fidelity of the OFS to the local Church. Finally, the visitors went on to the Kaunas-Vilkaviškis Region, where they were joined by Br. Steponas Vaičiūnas, a member of the diocesan clergy of that region. The Regional Council, the Regional Spiritual Assistant Br. Rolandas Taučius, OFM, and the National Council participated at Mass and the meeting with the other members of the OFS.

On their return to Vilnius, Br. Pedro and Dina met with the Minister of the Province of St. Casimir, Br. Evaldas Darulis, OFM, with whom the visitors expressed their gratitude for providing spiritual assistance to all the fraternities, despite the shortage of friars. This was an opportunity for both visitors and each member of the Council to share their experiences of life within the Order and the Church, as well as to share their joys and challenges both locally and nationally.

## OFS Burkina Faso, National Elective Chapter Ouagadougou, 19th to 21st September 2025



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The Secular Franciscan Order of Burkina Faso held its National Elective Chapter from the 19th to 21st September in Ouagadougou, at the “Sainte Famille Centre” in Saaba.

The Chapter was presided over by the Presidency Councilor for French-speaking Africa, Adolph Atsu Assagba, OFS, Delegate of the Minister General, Tibor Kauser, OFS; the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants was represented by their delegate, Br. Julien Campaore, OFMcap.

The Capitulars elected Alida Siguian Kabore-Sawadogo,



OFS as National Minister and as International Councilor for the next three years.

The OFS in Burkina Faso is still a small reality, which is canonically

described as a “presence”, but its members are very committed and zealous in living their Franciscan charism: there is a lot of optimism about the future!

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