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International Meeting of the Artist Friars of the Order of Friars Minor

General Curia, 3rd-8th November 2025

From 3 to 8 November 2025, the International Meeting of the Artist Friars of the Order of Friars Minor was held at the General Curia in Rome, promoted by the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation and the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office of the Order, with the collaboration of Br. Samuel Abiyu, violinist friar and student of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, and of Br. Antonino Clemenza, professor of philosophy at the Pontifical University *Antonianum* in Rome.

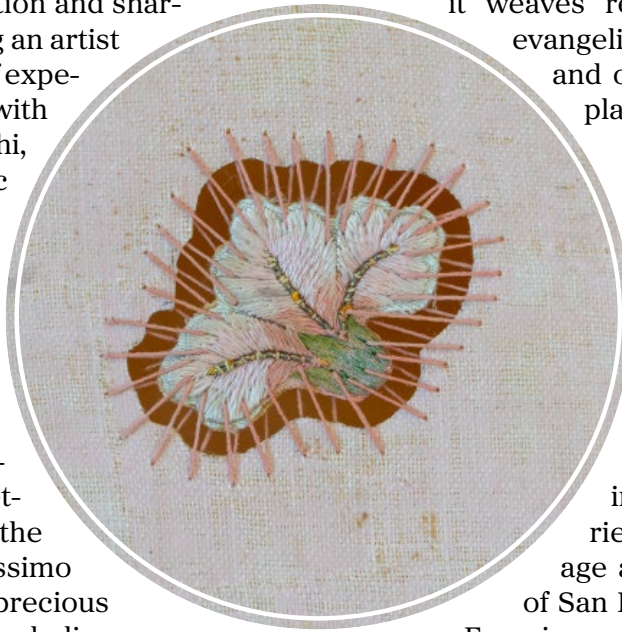
This year, in celebrating the eighth centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures, the artist friars accepted St. Francis' invitation to look at the world with new eyes, capable of grasping the presence of the invisible in the visible. The Canticle, in fact, continues to be a source of inspiration and creativity, an invitation to recognise the beauty of reality and to return it to the wounded world, with a spirit of fraternity and gratitude. The call addressed to all the entities of the Order was answered by 14 friars from Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Croatia, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands,



Poland, the Holy Land, Venezuela, and Hungary. In the richness of their different artistic expressions, they passed days of formation and sharing on the ministry of being an artist in the Order, of exchange of experiences, of confrontation with Br. Alessandro Brustenghi, tenor friar of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi and Sardinia, and with Br. Sidival Fila, visual artist of the Province of St. Bonaventure of Lazio and Abruzzo.

Amongst the most significant moments of the meeting, the dialogue with the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, represented a precious opportunity for sharing and discernment. In an atmosphere of fraternal listening, the Minister offered a reflection on the vocation of the artist friars at the service of the Church and the contemporary world, stimulating a fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives. Following the example of St Francis of Assisi, the friars rediscovered how art, lived as a humble service to beauty,

becomes a bridge of fraternity: through brushes, chisels, musical notes, words, colours and sounds, it weaves relationships, preserves the evangelical and ecclesial memory, and opens up to shared contemplation.



The artist friars questioned what a Franciscan aesthetic can be in the contemporary world and how art can become a way of evangelisation, when it is lived as a vocation and ministry at the service of the Gospel. During the days of the meeting, the artist friars also experienced a moment of pilgrimage and prayer in the Sanctuary of San Damiano in Assisi, where St. Francis composed the Canticle of the Creatures. The artist, an inspired man, is called to make God's beauty visible in everyday life.

The friars gathered together dreamed of new common projects, eager to make the Canticle of the Creatures resonate even today, with Francis of Assisi, in the life of the world.

See all photos on [Flickr](#)





General Curia Agenda



☑ From the 10th to 25th November 2025 the Tempo Forte will be held in the General Curia; from the 19th to 22nd the General Definitory will meet with the Presidents of the Conferences of Provincial Ministers OFM

☑ On the 18th November, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, participated in the Feast in memory of Br. Luca Wadding, founder of the Irish College of St. Isidor in Rome, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the College. On November 20th, the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, will be welcomed at the Porziuncola in Santa Maria degli Angeli, together with the Provincial Minister, Br. Francesco Piloni, and the friars of the fraternity. On the 26th November he will be in Acilia (Rome), in the church of San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio, to preside at Mass for the inauguration of the Jubilee Year that celebrates the 90th anniversary of the parish. From the 29th November to 12th December he will visit the Province of the Holy Korean Martyrs in Korea and the Franciscan presences in Laos and Thailand.

☑ From November the 23rd to the 24th, Br. Albert Schmucki, General Definitory, will be in Haus Ohrbeck (Georgsmarienhütte, Germany) to participate in the joint meeting of the two Definitors of the Provinces of St. Elizabeth (Germany) and the Holy Martyrs of Gorkum (Netherlands and Flanders),

with a view to closer collaboration between them in the future.

☑ Br. Iurii Semko and Br. Joseph Condren, respectively Director and Secretary of the Office of Protection, will participate: on November 24th at the online training meeting on Protection for the Delegates of all the Entities of the Order; on the 25th at the online meeting of the OFM International Commission for Protection; on the 2nd of December, in the study day organized by the Faculty of Canon Law of the Pontifical University Antonianum, on the theme of abuse of power and conscience in the theological-canonical field.

☑ From the 24th-29th November the General Definitors Br. Joaquin Echeverry e Br. Jimmy Zammit will be in Tijuana (Mexico) to participate in the meeting of the Conference of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which will also be attended by the Ministers of the Provinces of the Holy Spirit (Canada) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (United States).

☑ From the 26th to the 30th November, Br. Cesare Vaiani, General Definitory, will be in Hungary for a formation meeting with the Franciscan Family and for a meeting of ongoing formation with the friars of the Province. From the 2nd to the 5th December, he will be in Cyprus for a formation meeting with the Guardians of the Custody of the Holy Land.

Laudato si', mi' Signore,
per **frate vento** e per aere
e nubilo e sereno et onne
tempo, per lo quale a le Tue
creature d'ài sustentamento.



Government of the Order



Erection of the Autonomous Custody of the Good Shepherd of Zimbabwe *Fraternal visit of the Minister General*



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From the 25th to 31st October, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. Sipehele Gwanisheni, made a significant fraternal visit to the Custody of the Good Shepherd in Zimbabwe, until now dependent on the Province of Ireland.

During this intense week, the two friars crossed the entire territory of the Custody, visiting all six Franciscan presences and meeting each fraternity. These were days of deep dialogue with the brothers and sisters and of attentive listening to their daily life and mission, sharing the hopes and challenges of this young ecclesial reality now ready for autonomy.

The visit allowed the Minister General to get to know the pastoral projects of the Custody directly and to meet numerous lay people who actively collaborate with the Franciscan presences. Particularly significant was the meeting with the Poor Clares of Harare, testimony to the vitality of the Franciscan charism in Zimbabwean.

In the parish of St. Francis in Harare, the solemn Eucharistic Celebration of All Saints was held presided over by the Archbishop of the city. The Minister General, the Minister Provincial of Ireland, the

Minister Provincial of South Africa, the representative of the Minister of Mozambique, the Custos of the Capuchin Friars, other religious and a great multitude of faithful participated. During the celebration, the declaration and canonical erection of the Custody of the Good Shepherd in Zimbabwe as an autonomous entity of the Order of Friars Minor was proclaimed.

Br. Massimo Fusarelli stressed that this step represents a clear sign of ecclesial maturity and recognizes the place that Zimbabwe now assumes in the Order. The new Autonomous Custody brings with it a voice of its own, the fruit of an authentic missionary experience and a profound incarnation of the Franciscan charism in this African land.

The feast was celebrated with great joy by many faithful who came from the different realities where the friars are present and work. A living testimony of a Church on the move, capable of celebration and of looking to the future with hope.

In this Jubilee Year, the birth of the Autonomous Custody of the Good Shepherd is a sign of evangelical vitality: pilgrims of hope in Zimbabwe with St. Francis and St. Clare, ready to continue the journey of Franciscan witness in the heart of Africa.



Visit of the Minister General to San Bonaventura University in Lusaka Zambia, 2-3 November 2025

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, and Br. Sipehele Gwanisheni, General Definitor, visited San Bonaventura University in Lusaka, Zambia, where OFM, Conventual, and Capuchin students - along with others from various institutes - attend the three-year philosophy course. Founded in 1990, this institution has trained approximately one thousand Franciscan students, offering Franciscan philosophical formation and enabling an interprovincial and international experience. On November 2 and 3, Br. Massimo

and Br. Sipehele met with all students for Sunday Eucharist, with OFM students and formators for an in-depth exchange, and with the Poor Clare sisters of the Saint Clare Monastery

in Lusaka. This center remains fundamental for anglophone Africa and must continue to receive support from the Ministers General, Provincials, and Custodians who participate in it.



Venice, beginning of the new Academic Year of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies *St Francis of Assisi, a man of dialogue and hope*



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The occasion of the eighth centenary of the death of St Francis of Assisi inspired the theme of the Inaugural Address to the new academic year 2025-2026 *Francis of Assisi (1226-2026), a man of dialogue and hope*, held with great incisiveness by the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, who honoured us with his presence.

First of all, the starting point, the founding moment of the Franciscan vocation: St Francis' carnal, concrete, upsetting encounter with the leper and his coexistence with those excluded. It constitutes the paradigm of every authentic relationship and every authentic dialogue because it is the acceptance of letting oneself be transformed by the encounter with the other, especially with the excluded.



Many themes were addressed by the speaker, which helped us to rediscover the prophetic timeliness of the *Poverello* - the Poor Man - of Assisi as a man of dialogue and hope, in a time marked by divisions that are still open, by conflicts that tear humanity apart and by an unprecedented ecological crisis.

The Minister General reminded us that in the spirituality of Francis of Assisi, dialogue is first and foremost a Trinitarian action: the Father who in the perfect Trinity and in simple Unity lives, reigns and is glorified (FF 233), that is, the Father who gives himself totally in the Son, and the Son who responds in the love of the Spirit. If God himself is dialogue, then dialogue is not a simple pastoral strategy or a method of communication, but participation in the very life of God. Ecumenism, from this perspective, thus becomes an expression of the Trinitarian action that the Church performs.

He also reiterated that poverty is the condition for the possibility of authentic dialogue. St Francis embodied the evangelical logic of minority and poverty as a style of dialogue: the poverty of the Chris-

tian minor is that for which he lives stripped of any claim to domination, even with regard to the truth, and dialogues as a beggar for it, seeing it not as a stepmother who kills but as a mother who gives life.

St Francis's choice to live *inter minores*, among the last, is substantially an ecclesiological and eschatological choice. To become minor means to renounce any form of domination, it means to assume the point of view of the last as a hermeneutic of reality. This perspective is deeply imbued with hope because it inverts the logic of the world: it is not the powerful who make history, but the little ones, the poor, the excluded.

The Kingdom of God is proclaimed in the peripheries of the world. Br. Massimo Fusarelli concluded by indicating some promising paths for an ecumenism inspired by the saint of Assisi: minority as an ecumenical method, against claims of superiority and rigid identity defenses

that have weighed down the dialogue between the Churches; universal fraternity as a horizon, as an anthropological and ethical basis for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue; the primacy of the concrete gesture, beyond words, as an eloquent way of common witness in charity to walk towards communion; common prayer as a privileged moment for the various Christian Churches that anticipates that full unity that we still seek in history; theological formation and innovation, capable of keeping alive the *paradox* of the kerygma.

Eight centuries after his passing away, St Francis of Assisi continues to challenge the Church and the world with his prophecy of fraternity, dialogue, and hope. His life is not an example to be admired with nostalgia, but a call to be welcomed in the present.

Source: www.isevenezia.it

Academic Act for the Memory of Blessed John Duns Scotus 2025 Antonianum Auditorium, 10th November, 2025



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On Monday, the 10th November, 2025, at the Antonianum Auditorium in Rome, the traditional Academic Act in honour of Blessed John Duns Scotus, organized by the Pontifical University Antonianum in collaboration with the Scotist Commission and the Italian Centre of Scotism (CIS), took place. The meeting was moderated by Br. Witold Salamon, Member of the Scotist Commission.



After the words of greeting from the Rector Magnificus of the PUA, Br. Agustín Hernández Vidales, Prof. Paola Anna Maria Muller, of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, spoke. After a short break, Br. Josip Percan, President of the Scotist Commission, presented his Annual Report; afterwards, Prof. Luca Parisoli, of the University of Calabria and Scientific Director of the Italian Center of Scotism, dealt with the theme "*Ad mentem Scoti* today". The event ended with the intervention and greetings of Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor and Grand Chancellor of the PUA, who spoke of Blessed John Duns Scotus in the context of the VIII Centenary of Easter of St. Francis of Assisi and the deep bond

between the Poverello-the Poor Man of Assisi and his great disciple and interpreter.

Dr. Sottile – explained Br. Massimo – is not simply a Franciscan theologian, but an authentic interpreter and developer of St Francis' charism; an example of this are the eight prayers that, in *De primo Principio*, accompany philosophical reflection in the four parts of the treatise, which recall Francis' Praises to the Most High, "despite the total difference in style between the illiterate Poverello-Poor Man of Assisi and the learned Scottish theologian." All this reveals a convergence between the two, according to the Grand Chancellor, which finds its reasons in the common contemplative attitude of both.

In his speech, the Minister General referred several times to the Acts of the Conference on the VII Centenary of the death of John Duns Scotus (edited by Prof. Alessandro Ghisalberti and Prof. Ernesto Dezza, OFM) in emphasizing the relationship between faith and reason, lived in prayer. Connecting to the Eighth Centenary of the Eas-

ter of St. Francis that we are preparing to live, the Minister General highlighted how Scotus “developed theologically the Christocentric intuition of the Poverello-Poor Man of Assisi [...] This Scotist Christocentrism is not only an abstract theological thesis, but a vision that illuminates the meaning of our Franciscan vocation: to follow the poor and crucified Christ not to make reparation for the consequences of sin, but because He is the original and ultimate meaning of all creation.”

Br. Massimo also emphasized the importance of study as a service: “Dr. Sottile reminds us that the rigorous deepening of thought is not an alternative to the spiritual life, but its authentic service”,

which commits all the Friars Minor, and especially those of the PUA, to “combine the rigour of study with passion for the Gospel, intellectual research with fidelity to the charism, service to the truth with love for the poor”. “To all of you, teachers, students, collaborators of this University, I hope that the example of Duns Scotus may continue to inspire our academic commitment, reminding us that the search for truth, when it is authentic, always becomes prayer and contemplation”, concluded the Minister General.

[Read the Minister General's speech](#)

Photo from the OFM Archives

UFME Meeting in Poland

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, 27–31 October 2025



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Chapter of Mats (GO! Franciscan Youth Meeting) in Assisi in August 2026. Topics addressed also included the identity and fraternity of religious brothers and accompaniment of young friars on the path toward solemn profession. During the afternoon session we heard the testimony of a lay person living the Franciscan charism and associated with a Franciscan friary in Poland.

At the Kalwaria Sanctuary (Province of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM in Poland) a meeting of the Union of the Friars Minor of Europe (UFME) was held with the participation of the General Definitors for Europe and the Ministers Provincial of Europe. The Minister General of the Order, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, conveyed his message, which was read by Br. Konrad Cholewa, Definitor General.

Days marked by common prayer and the Eucharist favored reflection and the exchange of experiences. On the first day of the meeting, the Holy Mass in the basilica was

presided over by Br. Cesare Vaiani, General Definitor. The brothers' presentations and conversations concerned the organization of the Franciscan Conferences in Europe in the context of the declining number of friars, the role of the Plenary Council of the Order, the Chapter of Mats and cooperation with the laity, as well as the UFME statutes.

On the following day, the Holy Mass in English was presided over by Br. Albert Schmucki, General Definitor. On behalf of the CEM Conference, Br. Luca Di Pasquale presented a proposal for the participation of youth and young friars in the

After due discernment, a new UFME leadership was elected as follows:

- Br. Siniša Balajić of Croatia – President;
- Br. Antonio Scabio of Italy – Vice-President;
- Br. Benedykt Svidersky of Ukraine and Br. Pius Berhida of Hungary: Councillors.

On the final day, Br. Konrad Cholewa presided at Holy Mass in Italian. After the conclusion of the proceedings, the participants visited the Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków.

Chapters



Chapter of the Province of Saint Francis Solano, Peru *Lima, 3rd -8th November, 2025*



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From the 3rd -8th November, 2025, the Missionary Province of St Francis Solano of Peru celebrated its Provincial Chapter in Lima, presided over by the General Visitor, Br. Mario Wilson Ramos Novoa.

Our prayers are with the friars for their new ministry in the service of the fraternity and the people of God!

With an invocation to the Holy Spirit and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the capitular friars opened the Chapter in a climate of prayer and fraternity. After several days of reflection, sharing, prayer, group work, and presentation of proposals, the capitular friars elected:

- Br. David Fernando Tello Labajos: Provincial Minister;
- Br. Jorge Jolbert Cajo Rodríguez: Provincial Vicar;
- Br. Mauro Alberto Vallejo Lagos, Br. Jorge Alberto Horna Mendoza, Br. Nelson David Chanta Romero, and Br. Enrique Francisco Díaz Estrada: Provincial Councilors.



Chapters of Mats



Chapter of Mats of the Franciscan Family of Bolivia *Sucre, 24th-26th October, 2025*



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From the 24th-26th October 2025, in the city of Sucre, Bolivia, the Franciscan Family of Bolivia celebrated the Chapter of Mats, focused on the themes of the Eighth Centenary of the Cantic of the Creatures and the Jubilee Year. The proposed motto was: "With all creatures, pilgrims of hope".

country (OFS). Br. Walter Viviani, OFM, and Br. Carmelo Galdós, OFM, presented the Cantic of the Creatures on the 24th October; Br. Antonio Reyes, OFM Cap, shared the theme of the Jubilee Year on the morning of the 25th.

We gathered with 167 brothers and sisters from the three Orders of the Franciscan Family, including the young people of the YouFra and the children of the NiFra (Franciscan Children), as well as some friends and collaborators invited by the various Franciscan communities of the

In the afternoon of the 25th, we celebrated the Pilgrimage starting from the Church of St. Anne on Mount Zion, of the Friars Minor (OFM), passing through the Monastery of St. Clare (OSC) and the Parish of St. Francis of the Conventual Friars Minor (OFM Conv), to arrive at the Cathedral, where we celebrated the Entrance through the Holy Door and the Eucharist.

At other times during the meeting, we shared the work carried out in Bolivia through the Franciscan Centre and the Franciscan Movement for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation.

The national Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order, Bernardo Rada, OFS, also offered some criteria and guidelines so that interested people, particularly those who share the Fourth Order, can enter and participate in the Franciscan charism. The morning and afternoon prayers, with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and reflection on the Canticle of the Crea-



tures, allowed us to emphasise the importance of prayer for St. Francis and for us, placing the Most High, Almighty and Good Lord at the centre of our lives, and the value of daily Eucharist.

Before concluding the meeting on Sunday, the 26th October, we evaluated what had been celebrated and experienced, noting the positive and negative aspects, and offered suggestions for the next Chapter, which will be held in Cochabamba in 2026.

Br. Carmelo particularly thanked Br. Rodrigo for his constant collaboration and the entire team (Matilde and Moira from the You-Fra of St Clare, Marieta OFS, the Poor Clare Sisters, Sister Silvia FHM and Sister Lucia) who began meeting in March to prepare and organise the committees for this Chapter of Mats. The concelebrated Mass and final lunch with gifts, hugs and greetings encourage us to continue being Pilgrims of Hope, guided by the Franciscan-Clarian charism.

Br. Carmelo Galdós, OFM



Animation of the Order

Meeting of the Executive Committee for Education and Studies Zagreb - Trsat (Croatia), 4-7 November 2025



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The Executive Committee for Formation and Studies of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) met at Friaries of the Friars Minor of the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Zagreb and Trsat to review the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* and to continue the work on the formation guidelines for the Order stemming from the Plenary Council of the Order (CPO 2025), the Chapter of the Mats, and the International Meeting of Lay Brothers.

Participants:

- Br. Darko Tepert, Secretary General for Formation and Studies;
- Br. Sergio Mendoza Amaro (Mexico);
- Br. Fernando Ferrario (Argentina);

- Br. Sergiusz Bałdyga (Poland).

During the meeting, the Committee also began preparing materials for the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi.



Annual Assembly of the Franciscan Network for Migrants in the Americas

Praised be You, my Lord, for the pilgrims of hope!



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From the 20th-24th October, 2025, the Franciscan Network for Migrants in the Americas (RFM) held its annual assembly at the “Valley of Mercy” House of Prayer in Guadalajara, Mexico, which belongs to the Franciscan OFM Province of Saints Francis and James. The Provincial Minister, Br. Ángel Gabino Gutiérrez, welcomed the participants from nine countries.

During the meeting, concerns were expressed about the rise of an anti-immigration narrative, which is widely exploited by political populism. Similarly, the presentation of reports provided a direct view of the consequences of US migration policies, which have led to a considerable decrease in the migratory flow to that country, resulting in increased migration between countries in the South. Furthermore, the exponential increase in deportations was highlighted.

In his opening address, Br. Ignacio Ceja, Vicar General and special guest of the assembly, recalled the mandate assumed by the Order of Friars Minor during the last General Chapter, namely, to create or strengthen Franciscan networks for migrants and refugees throughout the world, because, he stated, “our commitment to solidarity in the face of migration is an essential part of our Franciscan evangelizing mission.”

Amongst the achievements of this meeting are the approval of the Protection Protocol, the approval of the general lines of action for 2026-2027, and the election of the RFM General Facilitator in the person of Rafael Lara González, a lay person of Panamanian nationality, and four members of the Steering Committee.

One of the special moments was the visit of Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas and Br. Dennis Tayo, heads of the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation of the OFM, who expressed their gratitude for the work that the Franciscan Family is doing in favour of migrants and encouraged them to continue this mission inherent in Franciscan charism.



News from the Entities



Syria, the return of Christians to Ghassanieh

An event of extraordinary human, ecclesial and Franciscan significance



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On Saturday, the 8th November 2025, a huge crowd gathered in the Syrian village of Ghassanieh, in western Syria, in the Orontes Valley. To the sound of car horns and drums, they welcomed the Latin Bishop of Syria, Monsignor Hanna Jallouf OFM, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Latakia, Monsignor Athanasius Fahed, and the President of the Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Pastor Ibrahim Nuseir. Together with them, a dozen friars from the Custody of the Holy Land [the entity responsible for the presence in Syria] arrived from

neighbouring villages and from Aleppo Latakia and Damascus, including Brother Firas Lutfi, the last friar remaining in the village, who remembers very well the murder of Father François Mourad (23 June 2013) by jihadists, the flight of Christians and therefore also of the friars and Sisters of the Rosary, and the subsequent bombings that devastated the entire village.

This helps us to understand the jubilation that envelops the crowd on this anniversary of their re-

turn to the village. Amongst the ruins, the ecumenical procession moved from church to church to bless the places and the faithful, as if to exorcise the evil and the many desecrations committed here. The Our Father is proclaimed with fervour: “There are no longer Greeks, Latins or Protestants; we are one people, we have suffered the same pain,” says Gisèle, with her youngest daughter in her arms.

The rhythm of the drums becomes more insistent as we approach the Latin church, dedicated to St Anthony of Padua, and the Franciscan friary Tony, in his early twenties, is full of praise for the Franciscans: “It is thanks to them that we can return home today.” Indeed, Br. Louai Bsharat and Br. Khukaz Mesrob, priests of the neighbouring villages of Yacoubieh and Knayeh respectively, have spared no effort since the liberation of Syria on the 8th December. Supported by Latin Bishop Jallouf, they have pleaded the cause of all Christians in the region with local and national authorities. Here, Christians have been expropriated of their property, both houses and agricultural land. Those who remained endured humiliation, deprivation of their rights and, for some, imprisonment and torture. As the situation worsened, the Custody of the Holy Land chose to remain present in the villages of Yacoubieh and Knayeh: the friars were the only religious to have endured all these difficulties alongside their Christian brothers, who serve as priests, nurses, teachers, lawyers and more. Amidst cries of joy, the faithful do not hesitate to carry them on their shoulders as a sign of gratitude.



In the Franciscan church, where crosses, stained glass windows, statues and the altar have disappeared, the Latin bishop leads the prayer. After the Our Father and the Hail Mary, the friars sing “Salve, Sancte Pater” in Gregorian chant – a 14th-century A Franciscan hymn – invoking the protection and help of St Francis of Assisi, prophet of dialogue and reconciliation. The task is immense, but the new generation of friars intends to take up the challenge.

Br. Elias Giorgios, a Syrian friar in formation in Rome, watches the numerous videos flooding his phone. “Ghassanieh is my home village. It’s like I’m in a dream, I can’t believe it. I’m speechless, I’m crying... My mother and brothers are here. I am filled with deep joy and, at the same time, I am aware of the extent of the destruction... But I have faith in the future; people have developed a very strong sense of belonging to our land during these years of exile. They are waiting for their brothers to return so that they can go back; they trust us.”

While celebrations are still in full swing on the steps of the Church of St Anthony of Padua, many families have laid out carpets and the laughter of children rises from the ruins. Coffee or mate is being prepared and, as crazy as it may seem, today everyone has returned home.

This is a “historic event for the Custody of the Holy Land, an event of extraordinary human and ecclesial significance,” writes Br. Francesco Ielpo, Custos of the Holy Land, in a letter addressed to all his confreres in Jerusalem.

Closing of the Jubilee Year for the 500th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Franciscan Order in Michoacán

Mexico, Franciscan Province of Sts Peter and Paul



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On the 29th October, 2025, the friars of the Franciscan Province of Saints Peter and Paul in Michoacán, Mexico, gathered in El Pueblito, Querétaro, to conclude the Jubilee Year commemorating the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the Franciscan Order in Michoacán and western Mexico.

The celebration began in the Parish of St Francis Galileo with a Holy Hour led by the Provincial Minister. Afterwards, a procession took place to the Basilica of Our Lady of El Pueblito in El Pueblito, Querétaro. Also in attendance were the Sisters of

the Order of Saint Clare, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order, and civil authorities.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Br. Enrique Gutiérrez, OFM, Provincial Minister, accompanied by Br. Ignacio Ceja, OFM, Vicar General of the Order, and the Provincial Ministers who make up Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference of Central America and the Caribbean. At the end of the celebration, Br. Ignacio Ceja read a moving message sent by the Minister General, Br. Massi-

mo Fusarelli, OFM, to all the friars of the Province of Michoacán. After the celebration, a fraternal gathering was held in the friary garden, where typical Michoacán and Querétaro cuisine was enjoyed in a festive atmosphere enlivened by traditional local music.

Thus, in this fraternal and festive atmosphere, we closed the celebrations for this Year of Grace. May the Lord grant us to continue living faithfully the charism inherited from St



Francis, to continue the arduous task of sowing the Gospel with the witness of our lives, and to respond with enthusiasm and creativity to the challenges that present themselves in our world today.

Long live the Franciscan Province of Saints Peter and Paul of Michoacán, a fertile cradle of the Church in central and western Mexico.

By: The Provincial Chronicler.

XVI Franciscan Youth Meeting in El Salvador

“Franciscans of hope, guardians of creation”



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On Sunday, the 26th October, the XVI Franciscan Youth Meeting was held at the facilities of the Don Bosco Multigymnasium, Soyapango, San Salvador, El Salvador. Young people from all the Franciscan presences of the town participated, bringing together more than 1000 people under the motto “Franciscans of hope, guardians of creation”.

The organizers were the friars of the parish “Our Lady of Guadalupe” of Soyapango, together with the Franciscan fraternity. It was a morning of joy in which the Eucharist was celebrated presided over by the Minister Provincial Br. Edgardo Manuel Pérez Tejeira, OFM, of the Franciscan Province “Our Lady of Guadalupe” in Central America and the Caribbean, accompanied by the friars of the presences of the region. The meeting was characterized by moments of prayer, reflection and fraternal sharing between friars and young people. The topics presented concerned the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the composition of the Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi and the Holy Year of Hope. This space has been created by the friars of El Salvador for 16 years, with the aim of introducing young people to the charism and spirituality of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

Br. Daniel Coyoy, Provincial Secretary

OFS



OFS, National Elective Chapter of Great Britain

Hoddesdon, 31st October – 2nd November 2025



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The National Elective Chapter of the Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain was held at the High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts, from the 31st October to 2nd November 2025.

The elections were presided over by Maurice Devenney, OFS, Swedish National Minister, representing the Minister General of the OFS, and by Br. Patrick Lonsdale, OFM, Delegate of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants.

During the Chapter, the National Spiritual Assistants, Br. Donal Walsh, OFM and Br. John Cavanagh, OFM Cap, were present, along with 15 capitulars and 5 observers. The President of the Chapter, after the opening prayer led by Br. John, asked all the members of the section to stand up and introduce themselves.

A presentation was then given on the theme of the Chapter "Service Leadership", which was followed by a debate. This was followed by the presentation of the report of the National Minister, there were votes and all the capitulars identified the future priorities for the national fraternity. Before the elective session, the old Council was dissolved to make way for the new one. The Chapter members

re-elected Kathy Maskens, OFS National Minister and International Councilor.

After the election of the new Council, his inauguration took place during the Mass, followed by the farewell of all the participants.



6th Asia-Oceania OFS and YouFra Congress Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia), 23-29 October 2025



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The OFS brothers and sisters of Asia and Oceania, after the postponed Congress in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, finally have the joy of coming together with the emerging fraternity of Malaysia to celebrate the joy of belonging to the Franciscan family. The Congress was held at Gaya Centre Hotel in the city of Kota Kinabalu in Sabah – Malaysia - from 23-29 October 2025. 72 brothers and sisters from Australia, China, Korea, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Timor Leste, Taiwan, Singapore, the Philippines, and Vietnam participated.

The Congress was officially opened by the celebration of the Holy Mass presided over by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu, Most Rev. John Wong, who, in his homily, reminded the participants about the theme of the Congress, "Go and Repair my Church," by telling

them that it is important to invert this, beginning with 'Church'- as a community of believers that need constant conversion - 'repairing' - oneself through repentance, then 'Go' and share what you have received from the Lord. At the end of the Holy Mass, the participants had a group photo, followed by the presentation of the General Minister, Tibor Kauser, OFS, who emphasized the idea of how to repair the Church: "Repair a fraternal life within self and others - but avoid repairing what is not even broken." He then spoke about "The role of the OFS fraternal animator for YouFra" and "The sense of belonging and responsibility in OFS and YouFra."

Then many topics were presented during the week. Br. Stefan Acatrinei, OFMConv, spoke on the "Canticle of Creatures," and Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM, presented on "Servant Leadership; Spiritu-

al Assistance and JPIC; and JPIC Spirituality.” The following day, there was a presentation by Mark Aimazan, YouFra Coordinator for Asia-Oceania and Africa, on the “Role of OFS and Sense of Belonging and Co-responsibility in OFS and YouFra; YouFra Activities in the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan,” as well as “Vocation Development and Communications; Vocation Promotion in Different National Fraternities.”

On the last day 29 October, there was the wrap up and the participants nominated Vietnam and South Korea to be the next hosting countries in 2028, followed by the closing Holy Mass celebrated by Msgr. Nicholas Stephen. This was then followed by the farewell message and thanks from the Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS and the departure of all participants.

Pro Monialibus



Assembly of the Federation of the Holy Family of the Poor Clares of Brazil

Canindé, 29th October – 1st November, 2025



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From the 29th October-1st November, 2025, the Federation of the Holy Family of the Poor Clares of Brazil held its Ordinary Assembly at the Monastery of the Most Holy Sacrament in the city of Canindé (Ceará – CE), home to the second largest sanctuary in the world dedicated to St Francis.

During these days, under the presidency of our Religious Assistant, Br. Fidêncio Vanboemmel, OFM, and with Br. Fábio César Gomes, OFM, General Assistant *pro Monialibus*, we reflected on the importance and meaning of the Federation for the Monasteries: *“It is a group of autonomous monasteries, a model encouraged by the Church since the Second Vatican Council, to strengthen communion, solidarity, and sharing among the contemplative communities.”*

Initially, Br. Fidêncio motivated us to reflect on the importance of the Federal Assembly, structured, organised, and governed by statutes that uniquely regulate the dynamics of the life of the 17 autonomous monasteries that currently make up our Federation, represented by 34 sisters, including the Mothers and Delegates from each Monastery. Br. Fábio, starting from the question that accompanied Saint Francis from the beginning to the end of his existence, *“Lord, what do you want me to do?”*, encouraged us to reflect on the same question in light of the moment we are experiencing as Federated Monasteries.

Furthermore, he shared with us what he summarised in four words that, coincidentally, all begin with the letter “C”: Contemplation, Charism,



Communion, and Compassion. Strengthened and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Minister General of our Order, we have arrived at the moment of the election of the new government of our Federation for the next six years, with the selection of Sister Isabela de Santa Maria dos Anjos, OSC (Mother of Providence Monastery, Cascavel/PR) as Mother President, and the following Councilors: Sister Francis Lara de Jesus Hostia, OSC (Monastery of Saint Clare of the Triune God, Brazlândia/DF), Sister Maria Karolyne de Jesus Crucificado, OSC (Saint Clare Monastery, Belo Horizonte/MG), Sister Maria Francisca, OSC (Saint Damian Monastery, Porto Alegre/RS) and Sister Maria Auxiliadora do Pai Eterno, OSC (Fraternity of Saint Francis of Assisi Monastery, Mossoró/RN).

To the praise of Christ!

Sr Isabela de Santa Maria dos Anjos, OSC

Federal President

LIFE in the Order



Deceased Brothers

† 28th October: Br. Demetrio Canale, Province of the Seven Martyrs of Calabria (Italy); Br. Luis Rodríguez García, Missionary Province of St. Anthony (Bolivia)

† 27th October: Br. Timoteo Gulay, Province of St. Pedro Bautista (Philippines)

† 22nd October: Br. Pietro Sorci, Province of the Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)

Information received from the General Secretariat



Holy See

Br. Pedro Orlando Castro Castro, OFM appointed Coadjutor Apostolic Vicar Bishop Of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Ramón in Peru



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On November 4, the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, appointed Br. Pedro Orlando Castro Castro, OFM, a member of our Province of the Twelve Holy Apostles in

Peru, as Coadjutor Apostolic Vicar Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Ramón in Peru. Br. Pedro was born on June 28, 1961, in Lima. He received the Franciscan habit on March 28, 1987, made his solemn profession on July 29, 1993, and was ordained a priest on June 29, 1995.

He obtained a Doctorate in Theology from the Theological Faculty of Lima, a master's degree in political science from Ricardo Palma University in Peru, as well as a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Universi-

ty Antonianum. During his ministry in his Province, he has served in various roles, including parish priest, Guardian, professor, Secretary Provincial, Definitor, and Vicar Provincial.

We extend to our brother, His Excellency, Most Reverend Mons. Pedro Orlando Castro Castro our heartfelt congratulations and prayers for his new ministry in the service of the People of God.

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OFM
Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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