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Pope Leo XIV celebrates  
the XXX World Day  
of Consecrated Life



**May they be a leaven of peace and a sign of hope**

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## Pope Leo XIV celebrates the XXX World Day of Consecrated Life

*“May they be a leaven of peace and a sign of hope”*



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On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2026, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Pope Leo XIV presided at Holy Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica to celebrate the 30th World Day for Consecrated Life. In his homily, the Holy Father exhorted men and women religious to be messengers who proclaim the presence of the Lord and prepare his way, recalling Pope Francis’s words: *“Awaken the world, because the note that characterises consecrated life is prophecy.”*

The Pontiff reflected on the Gospel of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:22-40), highlighting the encounter between two movements of love: that of God who comes to save humanity and that of humanity who awaits His coming with vigilant faith. “A few steps from the



Holy of Holies, the Source of light offers itself as a lamp for the world and the Infinite gives itself to the finite, in such a humble way that it goes almost unnoticed,” he said. Pope Leo XIV recalled the witness of the founders who, “docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, left wonderful models of how to live this mandate in a concrete way”. In constant tension between earth and Heaven, they threw themselves into the silence of the cloisters, the challenges of the apostolate, teaching, the misery of the streets and the fatigues of the mission, making themselves a “sign of contradiction”, sometimes to the point of martyrdom.

In a society where faith and life seem to be increasingly distant, the Holy Father invited consecrated persons to bear witness “that the young, the elderly, the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, have, above all, a sacred place of their own on the Altar and in the Heart of God, and that, at the same time, each one of them is an inviolable sanctuary of His presence.” He especially highlighted the many “Gospel barracks” that many communities maintain in demanding contexts, even in the midst of conflicts, remaining an eloquent sign of the inviolable sacredness of life.

The Pope also reflected on Simeon’s prayer, noting that religious life teaches “the inseparability between the most authentic care for earthly realities and loving hope in eternal ones.” Consecrated persons, with their feet firmly planted on the ground but constantly oriented to eternal goods, can show the world “the way to overcome conflicts and sow fraternity”.

“Dear consecrated men and women, today the Church thanks the Lord and you for your presence, and encourages you to be, wherever Providence sends you, a leaven of peace and a sign of hope”, concluded the Holy Father, entrusting the work of religious to the intercession of Mary Most Holy and of all the holy founders and foundresses.

Read [the homily of Pope Leo XIV](#)

See [all photos](#)

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## Government of the Order



### Visit of the Minister General and the Definitor General to Russia “St. Francis of Assisi” Foundation



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Facing temperatures well below zero, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, visited the Foundation of St. Francis of Assisi in Russia from the 31<sup>st</sup> January to the 8<sup>th</sup> February, also carrying out his canonical visitation. The Minister was accompanied on his visit by the Definitor General and Delegate for the same Foundation, Br. Konrad Cholewa, and by the President of the Foundation, Br. Stefano Invernizzi.

The Foundation, which reports directly to the Minister General, currently consists of only six friars: two citizens of the Russian Federation, three Italians and one Vietnamese. Br. Massimo devoted much time to listening to the friars who are divided between the two communities of Novosibirsk, in Siberia, and St. Petersburg, in the European part of the country. He celebrated the Eucharist and prayed with them, gathered the local chapters, and ‘simply’ spent time in fraternity. At the end of

his visit, the Minister General also convened the Council of the Foundation. The meetings with the pastors of the two dioceses in which the friars are present and carry out their ministry, giving Franciscan witness, were very fruitful: the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow, Paolo Pezzi, and his Auxiliary, Nikolaj Dubinin; the Bishop of the Diocese of the Transfiguration in Novosibirsk, Joseph Werth, and his Auxiliary, Stephan Lipke. All the Bishops praised the presence of the friars and asked them not to withdraw from their dioceses, even though they understand the great difficulties involved.

The meetings with the realities in which the friars are directly involved or with which they collaborate for the growth of the Kingdom of God were also very significant. On the 1<sup>st</sup> February, Br. Massimo met with the parishioners of the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Novosibirsk, whose

## General Curia Agenda



☑ From the 18th to the 24th of February, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. John Wong, will be in Papua New Guinea to visit the St. Francis Foundation. Afterwards, until the 2nd of March, he will be in Myanmar at the St. Francis Foundation, and then he will go to Cambodia (until the 5th of March) to visit the friars there.

☑ From the 20th to the 23rd of February, Br. César Külkamp (General Definitor), Br. Daniel Rodriguez Blanco (Director of GPIC) and Br. Francisco Gomez Vargas (Secretary of SGME) will visit the Missionary Fraternity of St. Francis of Assisi in Contamana, in the Peruvian Amazon region, Vicariate of Requeña. From the 23rd of February to the 1st of March, together with Definitor General Br. Joaquín A. Echeverry H., they will participate in the

29th Assembly of UCLAF, which will take place in Lima, Peru. The Minister General and the Vice-Secretary of the SGFS will also participate remotely in the meeting.

☑ From the 24th to the 26th of February, Definitor General Br. Konrad Cholewa will participate in the meeting of the Guardians of the Conference of St. Jerome in Zadar, Croatia.

☑ From the 3rd to the 7th of March, Definitor General Albert Schmucki will participate in the meeting of the International Commission for Protection in Malta, in his capacity as President. On the 5th of March, the Commission will meet with Monsignor Charles Scicluna, an expert in the field of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

parish priest is Br. Vitalij Kostiuk. Here, at the end of the Sunday Mass, during which Br. Massimo emphasised the 40 years of the Order's presence in Novosibirsk in his homily, he blessed a reproduction of Giotto's fresco depicting the *'Transitus'* of St. Francis and an icon of St. Francis that will remain permanently in the church, thus officially launching the Franciscan Jubilee Year.

In the afternoon, the Minister met online with the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order who are scattered throughout the immense territory stretching from the Urals to the Russian Far East. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, Br. Massimo, Br. Konrad and the friars of the community participated at Mass presided over by Bishop Werth and in the presence of Bishop Lipke in the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, on the occasion of the Day of Consecrated Life, during which the religious men and women renewed their vows to the Lord. Monsignor Werth presented the Minister General and the Definitor with a medal commemorating the consecration of the Cathedral, a symbol of the rebirth of the Catholic Church in Siberia after the period of repression. This was followed by a concert and dinner with all the religious men and women present.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, the Minister General and Br. Konrad visited our Catholic-Franciscan school *'Natale del Signore'* (The Nativity of the Lord), directed by Br. Corrado Trabucchi. The school, which is highly regarded by local authorities and parents, has been providing education for over thirty years. The pupils welcomed the guests with joy, sharing lunch with them and offering them a small concert. During their stay in Novosibirsk, they also visited the Sisters of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the projects led by the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Elizabeth of the Diocesan Caritas, with whom the friars have collaborated, especially in the past.



On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February, they spent time in Moscow, where they held talks not only with the Archbishop but also with the Custos of the General Custody of the Friars Minor Conventual, whose guests they were, and with the National Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order. Of course, they visited the city's most symbolic places: Red Square, the Kremlin, Christ the Saviour Cathedral, and the Tretyakov Gallery.

Arriving in St Petersburg on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, they were welcomed by the local fraternity composed of the Guardian, Br. Bernardin Turmann, the parish priest of the Parish of the Sacred Heart, Br. Iuri Cavallero, and Br. Joseph Ngoc Chau, who is now mainly engaged in studying the Russian language. In the late afternoon of the same day, at the Pro-Cathedral of the Assumption, Auxiliary Bishop Nikolaj Dubinin, OFMConv, presided over the Eucharistic celebration in the presence of the entire Franciscan Family of the city (OFM, OFMConv, FMM, OFS), with which the Franciscan Jubilee Year was officially opened. This was followed by a fraternal dinner offered by the Bishop.

On Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> February, after visiting our parish building, which is undergoing renovation, the friars prayed Vespers with the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary and had dinner with them. In St. Petersburg, there was also an opportunity to spend time fraternally with the local community of Friars Minor Conventual and to dialogue via video conference with the friars of the Smolensk Fraternity, belonging to the 'St. Francis Stigmatised' Foundation.

Finally, during the meeting with the parishioners of the Sacred Heart parish, with whom the Minister spoke, Br. Stefano, President of the Foundation, thanked the Minister General and Br. Konrad for coming to Russia as brothers amongst brothers to comfort, support and also correct them.

This visit, carried out in the spirit of fraternity, leaves a deep mark on the hearts of the friars and faithful in Russia. Despite the bitter cold, the warmth of the Franciscan charism confirmed once again that, in the light of the Gospel, there are no distances that cannot be bridged. The Jubilee Year that has just begun will be a time of renewal and hope for the entire Foundation as it awaits the celebration of the Chapter, in order to continue walking in the footsteps of St. Francis in this immense land and to bring the word of peace, goodness and reconciliation.

## The Vicar General inaugurates St. Anthony's Academy in Madurai India, Province of St. Thomas the Apostle



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On 30 January 2026, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jimenez, OFM Vicar General, inaugurated St. Anthony's Academy, a newly constructed school of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India, situated in Madurai, Tamil Nadu.



ed over the blessing ceremony, invoking God's abundant blessings and seeking the intercession of St. Anthony upon the school, its management, staff, and students.

St. Anthony's Academy stands as a significant educational initiative of the Province, aimed at reaching out to the neighbourhood of *Punith Anthoniaar Illam* (St. Anthony's Friary) through quality education grounded in Franciscan values. Addressing the gathering, Vicar general expressed his deep appreciation for the vision and initiative of the Province. He encouraged the staff to remain committed to holistic education and wished the students a joyful and fruitful learning journey in the years ahead.

The children of the school presented colourful cultural programmes, including songs, dances, and short performances. Despite their young age, the children performed with great enthusiasm and confidence, bringing joy and vibrancy to the occasion and drawing warm appreciation from all present.

The programme began with a traditional lighting of the lamp, symbolising the dispelling of darkness and the ushering in of wisdom, knowledge, and hope. Br. Ignacio led the ceremony, joined by the visiting guests, marking the formal commencement of the inaugural celebrations. Br. Baptist D'Souza, OFM, the Delegate of the General Secretary to the OFM Fraternitas Foundation, Rome, Br. Xavier Durairaj, the Minister Provincial, and Br. Saji Mathew, the Vicar Provincial, along with friars from various fraternities, were also present for the occasion.

Although the school had already commenced classes with the new academic year in June 2025, even while construction was ongoing, the visit of Br. Ignacio came at a particularly appropriate moment to bless and formally inaugurate the completed school building.

Br. Ignacio was accompanied by Ms. Maria from Germany, Br. Joy KD from GSFM, Waterford and Br. Bala Marneni, along with guests from the United States of America. Br. Ignacio then presid-

### Tempo Forte



#### *Communiqué Tempo Forte*



#### *Ordo Fratrum Minorum Secretarius Generalis*

The General Definitory's Communiqué regarding the Tempo Forte of January 2026 has been published.

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## Croatia, Visit of the General Minister and the General Definitor *Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius*



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From January 24 to 30, Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and Definitor General, Br. Konrad Cholewa, visited the Franciscan Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Croatia. In a week full of meetings, Br. Massimo and Br. Konrad were accompanied by the Minister Provincial Br. Milan Krišto, the Visitor General Br. Tomaž Hočevar, and Br. Tomislav Šanko, Custos of the Franciscan Custody of St. Jerome - Zadar, dependent on the Province.

On the first day of their visit, the Minister and the Definitor General went to Varaždin to visit the elderly and sick friars in the provincial infirmary. During this brief meeting, Br. Massimo encouraged the friars to persevere and to pray for the Province and the entire Order. In the evening, Br. Massimo celebrated Holy Mass at the parish of Santa Croce (Holy Cross) in New Zagreb (Siget), where he also met the brothers and sisters of the OFS in that area.

On Monday the 26th, at the central convent of the Province in Zagreb – Kaptol, a meeting was held with all the friars of the Province and the Custody, about 60 of them, to whom Br. Massimo addressed these words: “We are not a professional agency where everyone has a task to perform. We are an evangelical fraternity where we live together the following of Christ. Like the disciples on the lake, we must gather together around the Lord. Like Francis and the first companions, our identity does not come from what we do, but from how we live together the following of Christ.”

After the meeting, Br. Massimo celebrated Holy Mass with the friars of the Province and the Custody, and welcomed friars from other Provinces that minister in Zagreb. Present were also the Ministers of the other Provinces of the Conference of St. Jerome (formerly the South Slavic Conference).

The Minister General also met with all the brothers in initial formation: the temporary professed in Zagreb, the novices in Rijeka – Tersatto, and the postulants in Pula.

Furthermore, he met with all the formators and asked for a sincere and open dialog as they discussed the challenges of formation in their Provinces.

During their visits to the Province, Br. Massimo and Br. Konrad met with the archbishops of Zagreb and Rijeka, and in Serbia, the bishop of Subotica. Additionally, they also attended a session of the provincial Definitorium and one of the Custodial Council.

During a brief stop, Br. Massimo also visited friaries in Karlovac, Vukovar, Ilok, and in Serbia (which is part of the Province’s territory) as well as friaries in Bač and Subotica. In Karlovac, Br. Massimo witnessed the severe damage that had occurred as a result of the 2020 earthquake. Much there is still yet to be rebuilt, and the brothers there live in very difficult conditions. In Vukovar, he visited memorial sites of the War of Independence which took place in the 1990’s, where the Franciscan friary, along with the entire city, was destroyed. In Ilok, Br. Massimo visited the friary and the sanctuary of St. John of Capistrano, who died in that very city.

In Serbia, Br. Massimo visited friars who live among the Orthodox people where there is a weak Catholic presence: the friars, in fact, live there in a silent presence. Br. Massimo celebrated Holy Mass with the small community of Subotica, and then visited the friars of the Province of Bosnia Argentina, who have their own friary in Belgrade.



## Lithuania, meetings in the Province of St. Casimir January 27 – 30, 2026



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The brothers of the Province of St. Casimir (Lithuania) met from January 27 to 30 for two meetings, accompanied by Br. Jimmy Zammit, Definitor General and recently appointed Delegate of the Minister General.

From January 27 to 29, the Guardians and Bursars of the Province’s fraternities gathered for an exchange of experiences and share “best practices.”

In the afternoon of January 29, the Provincial Definitorium began a three-day meeting to carry out discussions and decisions regarding the Province.



## Franciscan Centenaries



### The prophetic dialogue between Francis and the Middle East *Second part of the series “Francis has your eyes”*



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On February 7, at Domus Pacis in Assisi, the second meeting of the series “Francis has your eyes” took place, offering a reinterpretation of the encounter between Francis and the Sultan, in light of the contemporary situation in the Middle East. The gathering was held in the Auditorium of the Domus Pacis complex, a space transformed last January

to be more conducive for such theological and societal conversations. A sustained applause marked the conclusion of this gathering, which was moderated by Sr. Mary Melone, sfa, Superior General of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Family. His Excellency Monsignor Paolo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia, and His Eminence Cardinal

Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Patriarch of Jerusalem, were the two main speakers. The first speaker offered a historical perspective of Francis’ experience in Damietta, while the second reflected more generally on the Franciscan charism, and the call even today to tend the wounded heart of the Middle East. The meeting of Saint Francis with Sultan Malek al-Kamil was not an act of aggressive proselytism, but a courageous witness and testimony. “Saint Francis had the courage to dialogue and express his faith without knowing what the outcome of this event would be.” According to Mons. Martinelli, embarking on mission among non-Christians is not about conquest, but rather an expression of our “minority.” Being submissive to every creature means witnessing one’s faith through a

humble love that welcomes the other without pretensions of power. Consider the example of the sisters in Yemen who decided to stay in that region despite many threats. “If the Eucharist remains, we need nothing else,” they proclaimed, testifying to the priority of a life of faith. Cardinal Pizzaballa focused on the reality of the Holy Land today, a place where hatred has been fed for centuries by people promoting contempt and fear of the other. The Cardinal reminded his audience that the Church cannot always afford to be neutral, as neutrality in the face of evil “can become complicity.” He reiterated the Franciscan choice to remain physically close to communities that are hurting. He explained that those who maintain

a radical and rigid self-identity have adopted that stance based on fear, while “our truest identity does not fear encounter,” rather it flows from the belief that we all “belong to one family.”

The event reaffirmed the value of *fraternitas* not as an abstract concept, but as “a work of love that should not fear failures.” We are not aiming for a future with one universal religion, but instead we seek to create a space where different faiths can collaborate and work for the common good of humanity. Peace is not a feeling, but a laborious task that requires shared responsibility on an institutional and civil level. Building bridges today means entering peacefully right where there is conflict without

bringing any more hatred. The meeting concluded at the Porziuncola with some silent and prayer there and by the Chapel of the Transitus and with Vespers presided over by Cardinal Pizzaballa. The next meeting, scheduled for March 7, will be dedicated to the theme “Francis and his brothers” and will feature Giovanni Grado Merlo, professor emeritus from the University of Milan; Br. Massimo Fusarelli, General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor; and Br. Georges Massinelli, professor of Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical *Antonianum* University, who will serve as moderator.

Source and photographs: [assisiofm.it](http://assisiofm.it)

## India, inauguration of the Centenary of the Transitus

*In the presence of the Vicar General of the OFM*



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The Franciscan jubilee spirit was palpable at St. Louis Friary, Palamaner (Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India), as Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, Vicar General of the Order, arrived on 27 January to visit the Novitiate and Aspirancy House of the Province. His visit marked a historic moment for the community as he officially inaugurated the Jubilee Year of St. Francis. The air was filled with devotion during a solemn prayer service where the entire fraternity gathered to relive the spirit and charism of their seraphic father.



Moving in a prayerful procession with lighted candles, the friars, novices, and aspirants followed Br. Ignacio as he reverently carried a Relic of St. Francis toward the Transitus Chapel. This chapel, a faithful replica of the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi containing the Saint's tomb, served as a sacred space for the community to reflect on the final moments of St. Francis' earthly life. After Br. Ignacio blessed the chapel, Br. Joseph Raj presided over a moving ceremony enriched by readings from the Franciscan Sources. For the aspirants just beginning their journey and the novices who recently donned the habit, the event served as a profound inspiration to cherish their vocation as Friars Minor.

In a profound message to the community, Br. Ignacio invited everyone to embrace the Franciscan vocation with a renewed spirit. Beyond the liturgical celebrations, he spent significant time interacting with the young aspirants and novices, listening to their vocation stories, their dreams, and their visions for the future of the Order. His presence was further felt as he visited and blessed the ongoing construction of the parish church. The visit also featured a joyful cultural program where the aspirants and novices showcased

their talents, eventually leading Br. Ignacio to the stage where he graciously shared his own singing skills with the assembly. The celebration was made even more joyful by the presence of Br. Baptist D'Souza, Delegate of the Secretary General to the Foundation OFM *Fraternitas* in Rome, Br. Bala Marneni ministering in USA, and Br. Vijay Amirtharaj ministering in Germany, Br. Gopu Rajasekhar, Project Secretary who were

joined by Ms. Maria Woste, Mr. Joe Wehr, Mrs. Geannie Wehr, and Mr. Tom Caprara. Meticulously arranged by Br. Sleeva, Guardian, and Br. Charles Bernard, Novice Master, the visit solidified St. Louis Friary's reputation as the "Cradle of Franciscans in India." Now designated as a pilgrimage site for the Province, the friary remains a true wellspring of the Franciscan spirit for all who visit.

## Chapters



### India, Intermediate Chapter of the St. Thomas the Apostle *A New Provincial Definitory is elected*



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The Provincial Intermediate Chapter 2026 of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India, was held from 2-7 February 2026 at National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre (NBCLC) in Bengaluru, bringing together friars from across the Province for prayer, reflection, discernment, and renewal. Br. Anthony Mathew Joseph served as the General Secretary for the Provincial Chapter.



The presence of Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, Vicar General of the Order, served as a powerful sign of the Order's universal identity, and his opening homily challenged the friars to deepen their authentic identity as Friars Minor. The letters from Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, and Br. John Wong, Definitory General for Asia-Oceania - soaked in fraternal affection and containing invitations to renewal and recommitment to the Franciscan mission - served as a profound inspiration for the brothers gathered for the Chapter.

Presided over by the Minister Provincial, Br. Xavier Durairaj, and animated by the presence of brothers of every fraternity in the Province along with the delegates from the Custody and Foundation, and

Temporary Professed Friars, the Chapter became a significant moment in the ongoing journey of the Province. [...] A significant moment of the Chapter was the election of the new Provincial Definitory, tasked with assisting the Minister Provincial in the governance of the Province for the next triennium. Brs. Tommy T.J. Thekkel, Praveen D'Souza, Alex Martis, and John Sekar were elected as the new Definitors. Following the election, the newly elected brothers professed the Creed and took a Solemn Oath of office. The entire brotherhood welcomed them with the exchange of peace, signifying a shared commitment to lead the Province in a spirit of service and minority. Looking decisively to the future, the Provincial Chapter issued a clear mandate for the coming triennium: the strengthening of fraternal life is to be a binding priority of the Province. This commitment will be expressed through the preparation of a Community Life Project in every fraternity, the faithful observance of daily common prayer, and the regular celebration of monthly House Chapters. These concrete measures aim to deepen communion, foster mutual responsibility, and ensure that the Franciscan charism remains vibrant and visible in every local fraternity, especially in the context of the ongoing Franciscan Centenary.

As the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle moves forward, the Provincial Chapter 2026 stands as a renewed call to live the Gospel with simplicity, fraternity, and joy - faithful to the Franciscan vision and attentive to the needs of the Church and the world.

Read the complete article on: [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)



## Animation of the Order

### Meetings in the Fraternity and at the Franciscan University of Kolwezi Democratic Republic of Congo, 2nd –4th February 2026



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From the 2nd to 4th February 2026, a series of meetings was held in Kolwezi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, involving the Fraternity of St. John XXIII, the Theological Institute and the University.

Since the three structures are dependent on the three Congolese Provinces of the Order, the meeting was attended by Br. George Misange, Minister of the Province of St. Benedict the African, Br. Jean-Baptiste Tabaro, Minister of the Province of St. Anthony of Padua, and Br. Benjamin Kabongo, Vicar of the Province of Our Lady of the Angels. In addition, Br. Sipehelele Gwanisheni, Definitor General for Africa, and Br. Daroko Tepert, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, also took part in all the meetings.

The guests met the Rector of the “John XXIII” University, which houses six different faculties, including the “St. John XXIII” Theological Institute, affiliated with the Pontifical University *Antonianum*. In addition, they had the opportunity to meet the formators of the Fraternity of Kolwezi, where there are currently 84 Franciscan students, temporarily professed and solemnly professed. It was a good opportunity to learn more about the training process, the challenges

and opportunities, and to look together for possible solutions for the future. The meeting with the Bursar of the house served to have clear information on the economic functioning and needs, while the one with the friars in initial formation, that is, the student friars housed in this house, was particularly interesting.

During these meetings, the Statutes of the Interprovincial Houses of the three Congolese Provinces were drawn up and the Statutes of the “John XXIII” University were started, for which a Commission will be established.

In the meeting with the formators and the Secretaries for Formation and Studies, the possibility of elaborating a *Ratio Formationis* and a *Ratio Studiorum* common to the three Provinces was discussed.

In addition to the Eucharistic celebrations, shared prayers and moments of fraternity, a very special moment was experienced on the 4th February, with the Inauguration of the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis, in the chapel of the Fraternity of Kolwezi, in communion with the brothers and sisters of the Franciscan Family.

News from the Entities



**Solemn profession in the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe**  
*Central America, Panama and the Caribbean, 7th February 2026*



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The Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Central America, Panama and the Caribbean) celebrated with deep joy and gratitude to the Lord the solemn profession of Br. Darbouze Jean Charles, OFM, a friar of Haitian origin. The celebration took place on Saturday, 7 February 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Church of the Oratory of St. Joseph, in the city of San Miguel, El Salvador.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Provincial Minister, Br. Edgardo Manuel Pérez Tejeira, OFM, and concelebrated by friars from different regions of the Province, in an atmosphere of celebration and fraternity.

Friars from different regions of the Province, members of the Franciscan Family, sisters, committed lay people and parishioners participated in this significant moment, joyfully joining in this event of grace. During the celebration, Br. Darbouze Jean Charles publicly professed his perpetual vows of obedience, detachment from possessions and chastity, committing himself definitively to live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the way of life of St. Francis of Assisi, in the service of God, the Church and those most in need.

This event has profound significance for our Province, as it strengthens fraternal and missionary life and is a sign of God’s faithfulness in continuing to call brothers to the Franciscan life. The

solemn profession of Br. Darbouze Jean Charles is a source of hope and renewal for our Province of Guadalupe, which continues its evangelising mission in Central America, Panama and the Caribbean.

We entrust the life and vocation of Br. Darbouze Jean Charles to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Francis of Assisi, asking the Lord to sustain him with His grace so that he may persevere faithfully in the vocation he has received.

Peace and good to all.

*Secretariat of the Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Central America, Panama and the Caribbean*



**Times of Franciscan Mission in Chile**  
*Encounter, Celebration, Missionary Commitment*



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During the month of January, the brothers of the Franciscan Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile experienced a strong and privileged time of missions marked by the encounter with families, the celebration of life and shared faith, the revival and

renewal of the evangelising commitment of the Christian communities, urban, rural and island.

*Mission in Angol*

From the 4th to 11th January, the friars in initial formation together

with their Master of Temporary Professed, Br. Luis Cisternas, OFM, lived a very enriching and challenging missionary experience, in a context of urban communities, corresponding to the Franciscan Parish “St Bonaventure”, a historical presence of the

Franciscan Brothers, in the Diocese of Temuco. Local church visited by two Popes: John Paul II in 1987 and Pope Francis in 2018.

The friars placed themselves in urban realities, encountering families and the diversity of social, cultural and religious situations that the new urban planning processes imply and that challenge the missionary and pastoral attention of the parish service.

The rural communities of Vegas Blancas and Los Mellicos were missioned by young people from JUFRA – Chile, from the fraternities “Semilla de Asís” (Coronel) and “Renacer Franciscano” (Mulchén), in the company of the National Spiritual Assistant, Br. Ronald Villalobos, OFM.

The high temperatures of the summer and the high relief of the Nahuelbuta Mountain Range were not an impediment for the

missionaries to visit the families with simplicity and Franciscan joy.

#### *Mission in Chiloé*

From the 7th to 14th January, friars and lay people, in the spirit of a fruitful shared mission, lived an intense time of missionary work on two islands of the Chiloé Archipelago: Quehui and Chelín, in the southern part of Chilean territory, the last stronghold of the Spanish colonisation annexed to Chilean territory 200 years ago.

This island mission is part of a three-year project (2024-2026) to accompany island communities, train catechists and lay leaders, such as the so-called fiscal officers; and likewise, visits to families, the elderly and the sick; strengthening of liturgical and sacramental life; support for young people and children in their process of maturing their faith.

This pastoral and missionary mission of the Franciscan Fraternity of Castro-Chiloé is the southernmost presence of Chile and of the Order; an uninterrupted presence of 468 years. The first Franciscan friars arrived in these island lands in 1558, and the mission continues with commitment and dedication.

*Br. Luis Alberto Nahuelanca, OFM*



## Poland, temporary exhibition at the Ethnographic Museum of Wrocław

*Images of St. Francis from the collection of Prof. Franciszek Kusiak*



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In the year of the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi (†1226), an exhibition dedicated to the figure of the Poverello, the Little Poor Man of

Assisi, was inaugurated on the 24<sup>th</sup> January at the Ethnographic Museum of Wrocław, one of the most important ethnographic museums in Lower Silesia, Po-

land. The exhibition, open until the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2026, is part of the jubilee celebrations being promoted worldwide, aimed at recalling the spiritual legacy of St. Francis and the relevance of his message to the life of the Church and contemporary culture.



The exhibition features over 350 works depicting St. Francis of Assisi, including paintings and sculptures, medals, stamps, and stained-glass windows. The exhibition, entitled *The Preaching to the Birds*, offers the collection of Prof. Franciszek Kusiak, historian and long-time professor at the University of Wrocław, who

for over eighty years has been passionately collecting objects related to the iconography of his patron, St. Francis of Assisi.

Visitors can admire numerous devotional images created using various graphic techniques. Some of them are unique specimens and rarely accessible to the public, others come from famous series published between the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by important European printing workshops. Particularly relevant are

two French nuclei from the first half of the twentieth century, which are distinguished by geometric ornamentation and the use of lettering typical of the Art Deco style. [...] The works presented testify to the richness of Franciscan iconography and the variety of artistic languages. As the curator of the exhibition, Joanna Kurbiel, points out, “the life of St. Francis was short but intense, marked by fundamental events such as stigmatization, preaching to birds, the encounter with the wolf of Gubbio and

the sultan of Egypt, the blessing of Assisi, the adoration of the cross and finally death, which still continue to be a source of inspiration for artists to-day.”

The exhibition allows us to retrace the evolution of the visual narrative on St. Francis of Assisi over the centuries and to grasp how deeply Franciscan symbolism is rooted in European culture.

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

## Chile, First National Meeting of Young Franciscans Castro, 20th-25th January 2026



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Under the motto “Brothers, because we are one in Him”, about 150 young people from 13 Franciscan presences of the Holy Trinity Province of Chile participated in the first National Meeting of Franciscan Youth, ENJOF 2026, held between Tuesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> January and Sunday, the 25<sup>th</sup> January in the parish of the Apostle St James of Castro.

For six days of profound spiritual and fraternal experience, ENJOF 2026 was transformed into a space for communion, reflection and renewal of youth faith, marked by the common desire to re-encounter God and strengthen the evangelising commitment in their communities of origin. [...]

The experience also included a pilgrimage to the Island of Chelín, where young people contemplated creation inspired by the Canticle of the Creatures of St. Francis of Assisi, integrating faith, nature, and spirituality, reinforcing the call to live

an incarnate faith committed to the care of our Common Home. For Br José Manuel Hernández, OFM, spiritual advisor to ENJOF, the youth event marked a significant milestone. Two years have passed since that dream, and the moment could be realised. “The participation of the young people and friars was very active, and there was a lot of fraternal interaction on the day. I thank the Franciscan youth ministry of Castro, especially the organising team, for their commitment, enthusiasm, and heart in all the preparation, and for taking the initiative and taking risks in this ENJOF project. I hope that this meeting will bear abundant fruit in all the presences that participated and that it will not remain just a milestone,” he said. [...]

Finally, it was announced that the next ENJOF will be held in 2028 in the city of Angol, giving continuity to this path of encounter, mission and youth fraternity in the Chilean Church.

Romina Jiménez, Confirmation catechist of the parish of San Buenaventura de Angol, takes with great responsibility and a great challenge to be the hosts in 2028, “especially for our young people, since it will be hard work at the level of organization and management, but also to enhance the gifts and capacities that each young person has, so that from there we can all together, as a large community of San Buenaventura to achieve the success of ENJOF 2028”.

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



# LIFE in the Order



## Solemn professions

7th February, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (America Centrale, Panama e Caraibi):

**Br. Darbouze Jean Charles**



## Deceased Brothers

† 9th February: Br. Vittorio Bosello, Custody of the Holy Land

† 3rd February: Br. Sérgio Antônio Górgen, Prov. St Francis of Assisi (Brazil)

† 14th January Br. Sylvien (Jozef) Wilbors, Prov. of the Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Holland)

† 12th January: Br. Roger Bruneau, Prov. of The Holy Spirit (Canada)

*Information received from the General Secretariat*



OFS

## OFS, National Elective Chapter in Rwanda 31 January 2026



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The Secular Franciscan Fraternity of Rwanda celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 31 January 2026. At the conclusion of this Chapter, a National Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) in Rwanda was duly constituted for a three-year mandate.

Dr. Valens Hafashimana, the outgoing National Minister, was re-elected for a second term and also continues to serve as an International Councillor.

The other elected members of the National Council are: Kayonga Edouard, Vice-Minister; Jean de Dieu Hakizimana, Secretary; Grégoire Nduwayezu, Formation Coordinator; Germaine Mukamana, Treasurer; and Alexis Habimana, Animator of the Franciscan Youth (JEFRA).

Continue reading at [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)

*Dr. Valens Hafashimana, National Minister, OFS Rwanda*

## OFS, Fraternal and Pastoral Visit and Elective Chapter in Lebanon

*The first visit since 2013*



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The National Fraternity of Secular Franciscans of Lebanon finally received its fraternal and pastoral visitation, which had been postponed three times since the last visit in 2013 due to political unrest in the country.

On Sunday, the 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2026, the Minister General of the OFS, Tibor Kauser, and Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM, representative of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, arrived in Beirut, where they were welcomed by the National Minister, Gina Chedid, OFS, and the former Councilor of the Presidency, Michel Janian, OFS, who hosted the visitors in his home and accompanied them to participate in the meetings. Upon arrival, visitors met Sr Marie Makhoulf, Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Cross (Franciscans founded by Blessed Br. James, a Capuchin friar). The following day, they met with several local fraternities of St. Joseph in Batroun, St. Aquilina in Jbeil, St. Elicha in Amchit, St. Rita in Erdeh and YouFra in Batroun.



The visit continued the next day with the meeting with the Fraternities of Beirut: St. Georges dekweneh, St. Nohrafurnel Chebbek, Our Lady of Salvation Ain el Rimmeneh, Our Lady Sin el Fil, St. Doumit Nabaa, St. Maroundaoura, St. Joseph Had-

ith, Our Lady of the Badarë Angels, St. Gemmayze, St. Simonsabtieh. Later, they went to another distant region where there is only one St. Francis fraternity in Zahle. Then they met with the fraternities of St. Francis Ghazir, Our Lady of the Rosary in Ehmez, Jesus the King in Zoukmosbeh, Our Lady of the Rosary in Hrajel, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Zouk Mikael, St. Antonios in Hariss, St. Challita in Faraya and St. Anthony of Padua.

The following day, the visitors met with the fraternities of St. Joseph Mtayleb, St. Michael Beit el Chaar, the Ascension in Dbayeh, Father Piojalel Dib, Ste Taklajal el dib, St. Peter and Paul Cornet Chehwen, and YouFra from three fraternities of Baadbat, Padre Pio and Valpere Jacques.

During the pastoral visit, the visitors met with the spiritual assistants, Br. Josif Florin Petrila, OFM-Conv.; Father Antoine Freiha, OFM-Cap; Br. Najib Ibrahim, OFM. Afterwards, we met with His Excellency the Rev.mo Father Cesar Esseyan, OFM-Conv., Bishop of the Latin Rite, and then with the Maronite Patriarch, His Eminence, Cardinal Bechara El RAI at the episcopal residence of Bkerke.

It was a long week of intensive visits and listening to each OFS and YouFra fraternity about their lives and missions within their fraternity, in the parish, and in society at large.

Christians in Lebanon are a minority, yet Lebanese OFS fraternities are found in almost every corner of Lebanon, even in places where the First Order does not exist. All the fraternities are very active and are present in the parishes of all the Christian rites existing in Lebanon.

The pastoral and fraternal visit ended with the election of the new National Council: Gina Chedid and some councillors were re-elected, while three new councillors were elected for the first time.



### Pro Monialibus, Immaculate Conception Federation in Brazil

On the 29th January, 2026, a new government was elected



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On the 29th January 2026, the new government of the Immaculate Conception Federation of Monasteries of the Order of the Immaculate Conception in Brazil was elected for a six-year term. The Board of Directors was elected by representatives of 11 monasteries present at the 2026 Federal Elective Assembly:

- President: Mother Beatriz Maria (Fortaleza)
- Vice President: Sister Lindinalva (Salvador)
- Second Councilor: Mother Eleusa Maria (Jataí)
- Third Councilor: Mother Aparecida (São Paulo)
- Fourth Councilor: Sister Francisca Beatriz (Piratiniga)

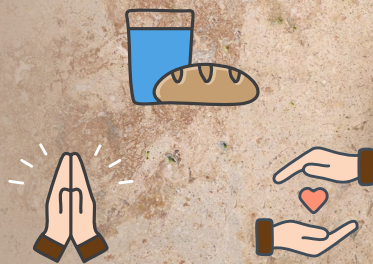


We entrust the Sisters to your prayers so that they may continue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the protection of Our Immaculate Mother.

## Allow yourselves to be reconciled with God

“In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.”  
Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2Cor 6,2)

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a journey of conversion and spiritual renewal. Through prayer, fasting and charity, we are called to rediscover the profound reality of Baptism and to renew our commitment to the Gospel.



## A blessed Lent to all!

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# OFM

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