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XXIX Assembly of the Union of Latin American Franciscan Conferences (UCLAF)

Lima, Peru, 24th-28th February 2026

From the 24th-28th February 2026, the XXIX Assembly of the Union of Latin American Franciscan Conferences (UCLAF) was held in Lima, Peru, bringing together friars from all over Latin America and the Caribbean. The official opening took place with the Eucharistic celebration for the 300th anniversary of the canonisation of St. Francis Solano, presided over by the Definitor General Br. César Kulkamp, OFM.

The Assembly took place in the historic friary of Los Descalzos and was attended by 24 Provincial Ministers and Custodes of the three Conferences: Bolivarian, Our Lady of Guadalupe and Brazil-Southern Cone. Members of the General Definitory and the Secretariats of the Order also participated, in person and virtually, as part of the journey of preparation for the General Chapter of 2027.

At the end of the Assembly, the change in the UCLAF coordination service



was made. This service, which until now was administered by Br. Fernando on behalf of the Conference of Brazil and the Southern Cone, now passes to Br. Gabriel Romero, president of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference and Provincial Minister of the Province of St Philip of Jesús (Mexico).

This meeting was a profound time of prayer, fraternity, and shared discernment, with the desire to offer a significant contribution from Latin America to the life and mission of the Order of

Friars Minor. The friars reaffirmed their commitment to walk together as an Order, strengthening communion between the Conferences and living the Franciscan charism with creative fidelity, in response to the current challenges of evangelisation in our continent.

The Assembly concluded with an atmosphere of gratitude and hope, renewing the desire that Latin American fraternity continue to be a living sign of mission, unity and service to the Church and the world.



General Curia Agenda



- ☑ Until the 20th March, the Tempo Forte will be held in the General Curia.
- ☑ On the 25th March the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, will be in Assisi for the entrance of H.E. Felice Accrocca in the Diocese of Assisi; on the 26th March, he will speak in Molfetta (BA - Italy) at the meeting on the Franciscan Centenary to be held at the Pius XI Regional Seminary in Puglia. On the 30th March in Rome he will participate in the Conference of General Ministers of the First Order.
- ☑ From 22nd to 26th March, the meetings of the Executive Committee of Mission and Evangeli-

sation (CEME) and the International Council for Mission and Evangelisation (CIME) will be held in Malta, with the participation of Br. Francisco Gomez Vargas (SGME Secretary), Br. Dennis Tayo (General Animator for the Missions), Br. Clément-Steven Boumekpor (of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation) and Br. Jimmy Zammit (General Definitor).

- ☑ On the 27th March, the Definitor General, Br. Cesare Vaiani will give a lecture at the Institute of Ecumenical Studies (ISE) in Venice, affiliated to the PUA, in the conference entitled "Francis of Assisi and the encounter with sister death: an ecumenical and interreligious reading".

Government of the Order



Resilience and Collaboration in Franciscan Life and Mission in Myanmar

26 February - 1 March 2026



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From the 26th February to 1st March 2026, the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, and the Definitor General for Asia and Oceania, Br John Wong, visited the Foundation of St Francis in Myanmar. The Foundation now forms part of the Province of San Pedro Bautista in the Philippines.



The visitors spent two days with the friars in Yangon and a further two in Pyin Oo Lwin, a hill town approximately two hours by road east of Mandalay. In Pyin Oo Lwin they were accompanied by the President of the Foundation, Br Francis Saw Kay Zar Min, and were joined by the Provincial Minister, Br Lino Gregorio Redoblado, and the Provincial Secretary, Br Angelito Andig Cortez. Myanmar, a Southeast Asian nation with more than 54 million inhabitants, is currently governed by a military administration following the 2021 coup d'état. According to recent data, around 88 per cent of the population is Buddhist, while Catholics represent just over 1 per cent. The people are largely deeply religious, gentle and hardworking, with rich and diverse cultural traditions among the various ethnic groups. The reality of the ongoing civil conflict profoundly shapes daily life. Many parts of the country, especially rural areas, are zones of confrontation. Movement is restricted, and there are numerous checkpoints. Some journeys that once took four hours can now last up to two days if they are possible at all. Poverty and low levels of education are widespread, particularly in villages. There is suffering on all sides, especially among the poorest. There are tragic accounts of violence, abuse,

human trafficking, abductions and the bombing of homes, churches, and convents. Many of these incidents never reach the international media. Within this context, the Order of Friars Minor maintains a small yet lively presence. The beginnings were as an international mission, and it was not without difficulty. With the intensification of the conflict, all foreign missionaries of the Order were required to leave the country. The five local solemnly professed friars, all under forty at the time, assumed leadership of the Foundation and ensured the continuity of Franciscan life and mission, responding to the needs of the People of God. Today, there is healthy growth in vocations, formation, and mission. At present, there are fifteen young men in various stages of initial formation in Myanmar and a further eleven postulants and novices in the Philippines. The friars own a small property in East Dagon, a working-class suburb of Yangon, and land near Pyin Oo Lwin, where they have planted trees and intend to cultivate coffee in order to provide future income. In Pyin Oo Lwin they live simply in two small houses made available by a neighbouring diocese. They cultivate a garden for their own sustenance and to support an orphanage caring for forty to fifty children, many of whom are victims of war and some of human trafficking. They collaborate closely with the Franciscan Sisters of St Aloysius Gonzaga (FSAG) and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), to whom the Order's presence in the country is largely due. The friars and those in formation also take part in pastoral service in a diocesan parish attended mainly by indigenous peoples and migrants. Despite difficulties and dangers, they have committed themselves to care for those in need, including emergency relief efforts following the earthquake that struck the Mandalay region in 2025. During the visit, the Minister General and the Definitor met the Franciscan family in Yangon and Pyin Oo Lwin, including members of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS), and greeted the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Lashio, who has generously supported the friars' mission.

Read more on www.ofm.org

Presence, fraternity and perseverance: the Franciscan mission in Cambodia

Visit of the Minister General and the General Definitor



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From the 3rd to 5th March 2026 the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and the Definitor General for Asia and Oceania, Br. John Wong, visited the Order's mission in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This was the first visit of a Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor to this missionary presence, which belongs to the Province of St Francis in Vietnam. Throughout the visit, they were accompanied by the Minister Provincial, Br. John of God Nguyen Phuoc.

On the occasion of the eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St Francis, the Minister Provincial brought to Cambodia relics of St Francis, St Clare and St Colette, which were exposed for public veneration during the various meetings and celebrations. It was a simple yet eloquent sign of Franciscan communion and of being rooted in a history that continues to bear fruit even in this land, despite the many challenges and sufferings present here.

Cambodia, a Southeast Asian country in the Indochina region, has a population of around 16

million. 95% of the population is Buddhist. Catholics number about 20,000 and are distributed in the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh and two Apostolic Prefectures. Most Catholics are of Vietnamese origin. Some families have been present in the country for more than a century, but many lack official documentation and do not have access to fundamental civil rights, including public education for their children. There are also challenges linked to the ongoing border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand, internal displacement, human trafficking, and the growing industry of online scams.

The Franciscan presence in Cambodia dates back to the sixteenth century, when Portuguese friars arrived from Malacca at the invitation of the king. That early mission, however, was destroyed in 1594 following Siamese attacks. The present mission began in 2009, following the invitation from the Minister General to the East Asia Conference to establish a presence in this country. The following year, the initiative was entrusted to the Vietnamese

Province, and in August 2010, the first missionary fraternity of three Vietnamese friars arrived in Tuol Krosang. Tuol Krosang lies about 20 kilometres from Phnom Penh. It is a poor village inhabited by farmers, fishermen and day labourers. Located in a low-lying area, it is affected each year by a flood season lasting about six months. Many children are unable to attend school. Around thirty Vietnamese families live in the village alongside Cambodian families, in a context marked by discrimination and tensions between the two communities.

Today the fraternity of the Order of Friars Minor in Tuol Krosang is composed of four friars. They provide pastoral care in six villages, the furthest about 70 kilometres away. They also run two small kindergartens and two small primary schools offering only the first and second years of education, due to the limited financial resources of both the friars and the families. The friars transport children from nearby villages, provide scholarships, school supplies and even bicycles to make school attendance possible. They visit families, assist in building and repairing homes, and offer financial support to pregnant mothers, the elderly and the sick.

The fraternity is also actively involved in meetings of clergy and religious, retreats and pastoral activities of the Apostolic Vicariate. Each friar has his own responsibilities and initiatives, yet these are always lived in a strong Franciscan spirit of mutual support and fraternal collaboration. Relations with other religions are good; there are about one hun-



dred religions in the country, seventy of whom are Vietnamese. The vision of the friars is clear: to evangelise among the Cambodian people, to help Vietnamese migrants obtain legal documentation and integrate into society, to be a bridge of reconciliation between the two communities, and to offer educational opportunities to poor children. This year they also began a centre to wel-

come orphaned boys between the ages of five and twelve.

During the visit, Br. Massimo and Br. John spent time with the missionary fraternity, visiting the church, orphanage, kindergarten, and small school in Tuol Krosang. They celebrated Mass with the Vietnamese migrant community of Bungchuk and shared a Lunar New Year

dinner with community leaders. They also visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a place of remembrance of the Khmer Rouge period, where between 1975 and 1979 up to 20,000 people were imprisoned and tortured, with only twelve confirmed survivors. Five of them were present to welcome the visitors.

Read more on www.ofm.org

Fraternital Visit to the Peruvian Amazon

Presence and hope in Contamana



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From February 20 to 23, 2026, a delegation of the Order of Friars Minor visited the Franciscan convent of Contamana, in the Amazonian region of Loreto, in Perù, after a six-hour trip along the Ucayali River.

The delegation consisted of Br. César Kùlkamp, General Definitor, Br. Francisco Gómez, General Secretary for the Missions and Evangelisation, and Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, Director of the General Office for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. They were accompanied by Br. José Surita, provincial treasurer of the Province of the Twelve Apostles. They were welcomed by the brothers of the convent: Br. Miguel Vilca, Br. Maico Herivas and Br. Francisco Miranda. The fraternity, founded a year ago and belonging to the Province of the Twelve Apostles in

Perù, responds to the Order's desire to strengthen its presence in the Amazon. Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, expressed the dream and desire for a Franciscan work in the Amazon, stating: "Our Order wants to give particular importance to the challenges involved in living our charism in this context".

This mission revives the historic Franciscan presence in the parish of San Francesco d'Assisi, in the Vicariate Apostolic of Requena, where Spanish missionaries have served for many years, leaving a deep mark on the region's ecclesial and social life. For Br. Ernesto Chambi, Provincial Minister, the decision taken a year ago aims to return to the origins of the Province, which has always had friars in all the regions of Perù. Now, the new fraternity is a significant place

because it serves as a reference point for brothers in formation and for all levels of the organisation, including schools, parishes, and sanctuaries.

During the visit, the brothers visited coastal communities, such as Canaan Cashiacó and the village of Lourdes, celebrated the Eucharist with the parochial communities and held a fraternal meeting to discern the challenges and opportunities of the mission.

The fraternity aims to live and announce the Gospel in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon, embodying the Franciscan charism through closeness to communities, the promotion of education, the care of children, the strengthening of parish life and the commitment to the care of creation in the face of environmental threats such as illegal mining.

Their presence in Contamana represents a concrete sign of the Order's missionary dream, in tune with the exhortation Querida Amazonía (Beloved Amazon), which invites us to welcome the social, cultural, ecological, and ecclesial challenges of this region.



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Third meeting of 'Francesco ha gli occhi tuoi' (Francis has your eyes)

*Giovanni Grado Merlo and Br. Massimo Fusarelli
on the theme 'Francis and his friars'*



On Saturday, 7th March, the third event of the series *'Francesco ha gli occhi tuoi'* (Francis has your eyes) took place in Assisi. Organised by the Seraphic Province OFM of Assisi, it accompanies us on a journey of rediscovery of the *Poverello* - the Poor Man of Assisi in this Franciscan Year, marking the eighth centenary of his death. The refectory of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, a few steps from the Porziuncola, hosted the meeting entitled 'Francis and his friars,' which featured Giovanni Grado Merlo, professor emeritus at the State University of Milan, as historian, Fr Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the OFM, as actualiser, and Fr Georges Massinelli, professor of Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome, as moderator.

The meeting discussed a concrete fraternity, lived rather than merely proclaimed, capable of responding to the challenges of the contemporary world. In a society marked by individualism, competition and widespread loneliness, the Franciscan experience, it was emphasised, reminds us that an authentic encounter is built on sharing life, caring for relationships, and choosing minority as a way of life.

The meeting, inspired by St Francis and his friars, sought to highlight the importance of fraternal and responsible relationships, capable of generating hope and a future in today's world. In fact, the

speakers affirmed, it is essential today to rediscover the value of open, inclusive, and supportive communities, in which differences do not divide but enrich, and in which service to the least becomes a criterion of credibility.

At the end of the debate, the participants went to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, where Francis left his earthly life on 3 October 1226, to relive the Memory of the Transit: a prayer ritual that sought to connect intellectual reflection to the beating heart of the Franciscan charism.

In the morning, on the occasion of the exposition of the remains of St Francis, the Minister General presided over the Eucharistic celebration in the Upper Basilica. In his homily, he emphasised the meaning of this veneration: "Why have we come here to venerate the bones of St Francis? Perhaps out of a form of ancient religiosity? Perhaps out of curiosity? Perhaps because we hope to finally find something or someone? I believe and hope that, in the end, we are here above all because we continue to be attracted to this man, because in him we have recognised, even if only glimpsed, the Face of Christ. It is Christ Himself who, through Francis, attracts us and calls us to this place. Nothing else."

Read the full text of the homily:

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

Siena celebrates the eighth centenary of the Little Testament of St. Francis

*Pilgrimage, prayer and Eucharist to remember
the last will of the Poverello-the poor man of Assisi.*



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On Sunday, March 8, the city of Siena celebrated the VIII Centenary of the Little Testament of Siena, written by St. Francis in April-May 1226, when death seemed imminent. It was an intense day of pilgrimage, prayer and Eucharistic celebration that brought together friars, faithful and friends in living memory of the last words of the Poor Man.



The celebration was born from the collaboration between the Archdiocese of Siena – which is commemorating the Centenary throughout the year –, the local parish where the Alberino chapel is located, a place that tradition recognizes as the one that hosted Francis and his companions, and the Convent and Basilica of the Observance, entrusted since 2007 to the Friars of the Franciscan Province of Saints Francis and James in Mexico. Present were the Archbishop of Siena, Cardinal Augusto Paolo Lojudice, the Minister General, Br.

Massimo Fusarelli, the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja, friars of the General Curia and the Province of Tuscany. In the early afternoon, the numerous participants met in the historic Church of St. Francis, held by the Friars Minor Conventual, where a moment of prayer and adoration began the pilgrimage on foot, which wound along the streets of the city to the chapel of the Alberino, where the memory of the Testament became more alive and intense. The journey continued towards the Basilica of the Observance, where a prayer vigil prepared everyone for the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Cardinal Lojudice.

During the Mass, the Minister General gave the homily, interweaving the Gospel of the Samaritan woman – with her search for meaning and the encounter with the face of Christ – with the path that Francis proposes through the three recommendations of the Testament: mutual love, poverty and obedience to the Church. These three words marked the stages of the pilgrimage and were re-interpreted in the celebration as a timely invitation for fraternal life and the mission of the Order.

The wide participation of the faithful, friars and representatives of the Diocese gave the day an atmosphere of joy and gratitude, in the sign of a gift that remains alive and current after eight centuries.

The Little Testament of Siena

Write that I bless all my friars, who are now in this religion and those who will enter it until the end of the world. And since, because of weakness and the suffering of illness, I cannot speak, I briefly express my will to my brothers in these three words.

That is: as a sign and memory of my blessing and my testament,
always love one another,

Let them always love and observe Our Lady Holy Poverty, and always be faithful and submissive to the prelates and to all the clerics of Holy Mother Church.

Franciscan Family in Rwanda celebrates the 800th anniversary of the Death of St. Francis

St. Francis of Assisi: The Seed of Fraternity and Peace



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From 6 to 8 March, in Nyamasheke, the 800th anniversary of the Death of St. Francis of Assisi was celebrated in the new Poor Clares' Monastery, inaugurated on 1 May 2025, near the waters of Lake Kivu: a quiet, peaceful place, well-suited for prayer, marked by a spirit of fraternity and joy. The gathering as a Family was an event that held a special place in the history of the Franciscans in Rwanda. The three days unfolded under the theme: "St. Francis of Assisi: the Seed of Fraternity and Peace".

This Jubilee theme was not a phrase to be hung on a page, on a poster, or repeated in speeches and

ceremonies; rather, it was a message that challenged hearts and hands, especially in the countries of the Great Lakes, namely Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

They experienced the celebration as an invitation to change their lives, to undertake works of peace and fraternity, and to care for them until they bear visible fruits in homes, in parishes, and throughout the Great Lakes region.

With the contribution of Br. Diacolas Nsabimana



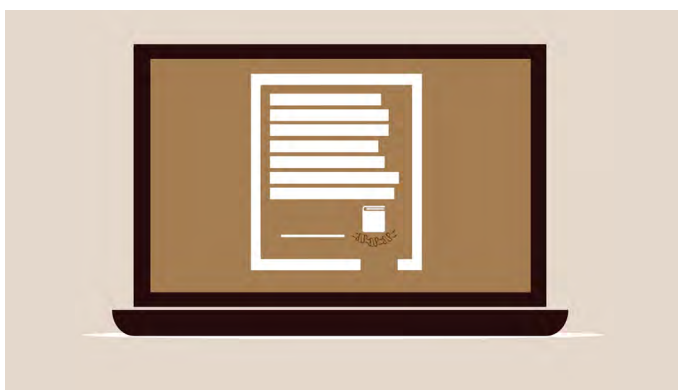
Animation of the Order

Letter to Formators of the Postulants

Fifth Letter on Formation and Studies



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The fifth Letter on Formation and Studies addressed to Formators of the Postulants has been published. It is hoped that these letters, always agreed upon with the General Definitory, will offer encouragement and important insights for the formation process.

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

**Message on the Occasion of Ramadan
1447 and Lent 2026**
OFM Commission for the service of Dialogue



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Dear Muslim brothers and sisters,
Dear Christian brothers and sisters,
May the Lord grant you His peace!

In this year 1447 AH and 2026 AD, our two communities have begun together their month of fasting, prayer, and sharing. Together, on our own paths, faithful to our respective traditions but under God’s gaze, we strive to transform our lives for the better and draw closer to the Most High and the path He desires for us in this world.

These paths of authentic inner conversion—as we know from experience—are not easy to tra-

verse, so heavily do habits and sin weigh upon us. But they are not the only things that pose a danger to our earthly pilgrimage in truth with God. The world around us also exerts its influence, intruding upon our breaking of the fast, our diligent reading of the Word of God, and our social interactions. This year, violence has erupted again in the midst of our holy months. Images of war are imprinted on our minds and add to the climate of uncertainty that has marked these past months...

Download the full text of the Letter:

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

**Meeting of the OFM International
Commission for Safeguarding**
Malta, March 3-6, 2026



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From March 3 to 6, 2026, the OFM Permanent International Commission for Safeguarding met in Malta. During this meeting, they discussed the status of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in the various regions of the Order, the integration of Safeguarding into the revised *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, and proposed revisions to the General Statutes regarding Safeguarding.

Furthermore, at the Provincial House in Valletta, the Commission met with Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and one of the Church’s leading experts on Safeguarding. During a thoughtful exchange on some current Safeguarding issues, the Commission received encouragement from Archbishop Scicluna for its work.

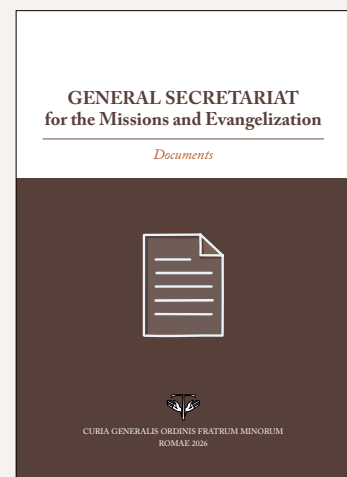


GSME Documents

A Collection of Documents of the General Secretariat for the Missions and Evangelisation has been published: it contains the Special Statutes of the Secretariat, the General Animation Guidelines for Mission ad gentes and the Memorandum of Agreement for Mission ad gentes.

Download PDF:

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Franciscan Mission Leaders Gather in Nagasaki to Renew Evangelization in East Asia

February 23–27, 2026 - East Asia Conference (EAC)



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Franciscan mission leaders from across East Asia gathered in Nagasaki from February 23–27, 2026, for the 2026 East Asia Conference (EAC) Secretaries for Missions and Evangelisation Meeting, held at the St. Francis Friary. Rooted in prayer, fraternal dialogue, and shared discernment, the meeting sought to renew Franciscan missionary identity in the light of the *Ratio Evangelizationis: Ite in Mundum*, the approaching 8th Centenary of the Transitus (Easter) of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Conference's common commitment to the Nagasaki Mission of Peace Project.

The meeting formally opened with Holy Mass and Morning Prayer at Motohara Church, presided over by Brother Lino Gregorio Redoblado, OFM, President of the East Asia Conference. In his opening homily, Brother Redoblado framed the gathering around three guiding lights: the Gospel mandate *Ite in Mundum*—“Go into the whole world”; the Easter of St. Francis as a horizon of hope, surrender, and reconciliation; and the shared Franciscan responsibility to witness peace in a world marked by suffering. He emphasised that mission flows first from God, is lived through fraternity and minority, and leads Franciscans to wounded places where peace must be patiently built. Following the opening liturgy, Brother Nicholas Shin, OFM, of the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Japan, presented the orienta-

tion and rationale of the meeting, situating the discussions within the concrete missionary realities of East Asia. Reports from the Franciscan Provinces and Entities of the region followed, reflecting the diverse cultural, religious, and social contexts of mission across Asia.

The meeting brought together representatives of Franciscan Provinces and Entities serving in Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, namely the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Japan; the Province of the Holy Korean Martyrs; the Province of Saint Francis of Assisi in Vietnam; the Province of Mary Queen of China serving Taiwan and Hong Kong; and the Philippine Provinces of San Pedro Bautista and San Antonio de Padua. Through their reports, the brothers shared the joys and challenges of mission lived *inter gentes*, marked by dialogue, minority, migrant accompaniment, ecological commitment, and daily witness among peoples of different faiths and cultures.

A significant focus of the gathering was the Nagasaki Mission of Peace Project, presented by Brother Francis Furusato, OFM, who highlighted Nagasaki's enduring significance as a land shaped by martyrdom, atomic devastation, and resilient hope. He emphasised Nagasaki as a privileged place for Franciscan witness to reconciliation, nonviolence,

and peace in a world increasingly fractured by conflict and injustice. The meeting continued with sustained prayer and reflection, including a Lenten homily preached by Brother Pedro Roberto B. Mananzala, OFM, who reflected on the Gospel's "Sign of Jonah" as a call to conversion and mission. Drawing from *Ite in Mundum*, he emphasised *metanoia*—a turning away from comfort and privilege toward humble presence and shared humanity—and reminded the brothers that, for Franciscans, the whole world is the cloister where God is encountered, and the Gospel is lived.

The final Entity report was delivered by Brother Nicholas Shin for the Province of the Holy Martyrs

of Japan, followed by a review and discussion of the *Ratio Evangelizationis* facilitated by Brother Jovit M. Malinao, OFM. The discussion underscored the Franciscan call to prioritise presence over projects and credible witness over words in the Church's evangelising mission today. Updates on Conference-level formation initiatives and possible collaboration between the Secretariats for Formation and for Missions and Evangelization were later presented by Brother Judee Mar Maquinad, OFM.

Read more on www.ofm.org

Read the Final Statement
[Italiano](#) - [English](#) - [Español](#)

Meeting of the Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies of Poland

Poznań, 5–6 March 2026



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the current tasks and challenges related to formation.

During the meeting, current topics concerning formation in Poland were addressed, raising several key questions: What are the most important challenges facing Franciscan formation today? Where are we, and where is the Spirit leading us? What are the real difficulties faced by formators? How are formators prepared for their ministry? And what changes in mentality seem necessary in the present situation?

One of the main goals of the meeting was to discuss and plan further work on the Statute of the Postulancy and Novitiate and on the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* for the Interprovincial House of Temporarily Professed Friars in Kraków-Bronowice.

The meeting took place in an atmosphere of fraternal dialogue and active engagement from all participants, fostering common discernment regarding future directions of cooperation in the field of formation.

From the 5th–6th March 2026 a meeting of the Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies of Poland was held in Poznań, at the friary of the Friars Minor of the Province of St. Francis of Assisi. The meeting was attended by Br. Franciszek Salezy Nowak, OFM, Br. Franciszek Chodkowski, OFM, Br. Grzegorz Chomiuk, OFM, Br. Oskar Maciaczyk, OFM and Br. Euzebiusz Skorupa, OFM. The event was organised

by the Secretary for Formation and Studies of the North-Slavic Conference, Br. Sergiusz Bałdyga, OFM.

The meeting had a working and organisational character. One element of the gathering was a reflection on the letter of the General Secretary for Formation and Studies, Br. Darko Tepert, OFM, which became a point of reference for a shared discussion on

Fraternal meeting of the Provinces of Malta and Sicily

February 24-27, 2026



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concrete steps to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen collaboration between the Provinces. On the 26th February, guided by the General Definitor Br. Cesare Vaiani, the friars enjoyed a formative moment drawing from the Manual of Guardians, published by the Order in 2019. During these days, there was lively discussion and wonderful moments of fraternity, enriched by cultural outings to Rabat and Valletta. All participants were filled with gratitude to the Lord, as they enjoyed the richness of fraternity and the beauty of God, the Giver of all good gifts.

Br. Antonio Timpanaro, Delegate for Communications

From February 24 to 27, 2026, the Guardians and Delegates of the Province of St. Paul the Apostle of Malta and the Province of the Holy Name of Jesus of Sicily (Italy), together with the Definitors of the two Provinces, gathered in Malta at the Jesuit Fathers'

Center of Spirituality for a time of formation, fraternity, and discussion on the ministry entrusted to them. On the morning of February 25, the friars participated in an online meeting with the General Minister, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, who proposed some

Madrid hosts the meeting of Ministers and Provincial Vicars of Spain and Portugal

23-24 February 2026



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On February 23 and 24, 2026, the meeting of Ministers and Provincial Vicars of the Franciscan Provinces of Spain and Portugal took place at the Provincial Curia of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Madrid. Br. Sergiusz Bałdyga, General Delegate, and Br. Manolo Díaz Buiza, secretary of the unification process, also participated.

The meeting was part of the discernment process aimed at the federation and future unification of the Provinces. The work carried out focused on reviewing the roadmap, listening to the specific reality of each Province, and analysing the exercise of government in the service of the fraternities.

Throughout the meeting, priorities, and key aspects of the path toward integration were identified, the criteria that should underpin this process were clarified, and strategic lines for the next stages were specified. The meeting took place in an atmosphere of fraternal dialogue, shared responsibility, and common search, reaffirming the com-

mitment to move forward together in communion. The group's next meeting is scheduled for July in Santiago de Compostela, where they will continue to deepen this shared journey.



LIFE in the Order



Priestly Ordinations

14 February, Prov. Immaculate Conception
(Spain)

Br. Israel Bonilla Jaramillo

13 December, Prov. NS Queen of Peace
(South Africa)

Br. Nicholas (Cebolenkosi) Memela



Deceased Brothers

† 6th March: Br. Maurilio Lazzaro, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

† 5th March: Br. William Lanning, Prov. NS of Guadalupe (USA)

† 4th March: Br. Antonio José Gaviria Londoño, Prov. St. Paul the Apostle (Colombia)

† 1st March: Br. Gabriel (Frank Anthony) Balassone, Prov. NS of Guadalupe (USA)

† 26th February: Br. Francisco (Francisco Antonio Antonio) Coria Antiguí, Prov. Province of the Assumption of the BVM of the Rio de la Plata (Argentina)

† 21st February: Br. Ewood (Jan) Moermans, Prov. Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (born in Belgium)

† 13th February: Br. Ninian (Francis) Arbuckle, Prov. of Ireland (born in Great Britain)

† 8th February: Br. Roeland-Maria (Ivo) Van Besien, Prov. The Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (born in Belgium)

Information received from the General Secretariat

Prayer

LENT 2026

“When you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father, who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you”
(Mt. 6:6).



A blessed Lent to all!



OFS South Africa, National Elective Chapter 26 February - 1 March 2026



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The Secular Franciscan Order of the National Fraternity of South Africa gathered at La Verna Retreat Centre of the Order of Friars Minor on the banks of the Vaal River in Vanderbijlpark for its national elective chapter from 26 February to 1 March 2026. The 20 OFS members and 4 spiritual assistants—2 national spiritual assistants, Br. Dominic Griego, OFM Cap, and Br. Delani Chiliza, TOR; 2 local spiritual assistants, Br. Finbar Flanagan, OFM, and Br. Clement Kholopa, OFM—were joined by a delegation from the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS), represented by Mary Stronach, Vice General Minister of OFS; Eremenciana Chinyama, OFS, Presidency Area Councillor for English and Portuguese-speaking Africa; and the representative of the Conference of the General Spiritual Assistants, Br. Pedro Zitha, OFM.

The Minister Provincial of the Friars Minor, Br. Ndumiso Khumalo, OFM, officially opened the National Chapter with a prayer and welcomed the CIOFS visitors. On the first day of the chapter, it was dedicated to the reports from the National Minister, treasurer, formator, and the conference of the national spiritual assistants. Then followed the formation session conducted by Mary and Eremenciana on *“Responsibility and Roles of the Officers and of each Office.”* On Saturday, the day began with the Liturgy of the Hours and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and after breakfast, another formation session was conducted by the general spiritual assistant on *“Spiritual Assistants and their Roles in Fraternities.”*

Followed by another formation session conducted by Mary and Eremenciana, who spoke on the *“identity of OFS - who are we? The need for proper formation.”*

Then there was a presentation on the International Statutes and the national statutes, intended to raise awareness among all OFS members of the diverse issues to be observed when a national statute is drafted for approval. After the intense morning, the elective session began with the theme: *“I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach*

you what is yours to do.” Before the elective session, the OFS members had voted unanimously on the reports from the National Minister, treasurer, formator, spiritual assistants, and the 2026 budget.

The capitulars finally had the great joy of electing a new council after so many years of not being able to elect one, as for some years the CIOFS had been nominating the Council due to the lack of *quorum*. The National Council of South Africa elected Thabang Senyakoe, OFS, as a National Minister, and Maetsane Mothibe, OFS, as an International Councillor for the next three years.

Immediately following the celebration of the Holy Mass for the installation of the New Council, the Old and New Councils met to draft priorities to ensure a strong, effective OFS rule and Constitutions that promote the spiritual and pastoral maturity of OFS members and Spiritual Assistants in South Africa.

Despite the long and challenging elective session, the capitular had successfully and joyfully finalised it with the celebration of the Holy Mass presided over by the Minister Provincial, Br. Ndumiso Khumalo, OFM, during which all present witnessed the installation of the newly elected national Council of the Secular Franciscan Order in South Africa.





Visit of Br. Fabio Cesar Gomes to the monasteries of the Poor Clares in India

Rosa Mystica Federation



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In the framework of the Silver Jubilee of the Rosa Mystica Federation (PCC India), Br. Fabio Cesar Gomes, OFM, General Delegate of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare, made a fraternal visit to the monasteries of the Poor Clares in India. Over the course of ten days, the route ran from west to east and from north to south of the country, covering more than 4,972 kilometres of flights and roads.

In the dialogue with the communities, Br. Fabio emphasised with insistence the serene joy, the wisdom that comes from listening, and the strength of fraternal love lived in daily life, as concrete expressions of the spiritual heritage of St. Francis and St. Clare. He also had the opportunity to visit the Taj Mahal, in Agra, known as the “City of Love”, and to meet with the animators of the local Church, including Archbishop Raphy Manjaly and Archbishop Emeritus Albert D’Souza, in an atmosphere of esteem and ecclesial communion.

In the path between the monasteries, the communities visited were the Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi (Aradhana), Etmadpur, with 10 sisters; St. Clare’s Monastery, Raiganj, with 12 sisters; St. Joseph’s Monastery, Dudhani (Dumka), with 4 sisters; the Panakahalli Monastery, with 8 sisters; the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, Aluva, with 10 sisters; and St. Colette’s Monastery, Shamshabad, with 15 sisters. In every place, the visit was experienced as a gesture of closeness

and confirmation in the contemplative vocation, which silently supports the evangelising mission of the whole Church.

He also participated in the jubilee celebration at the Monastery of St. Colette’s, where Sisters from various monasteries gathered to share a few days of prayer, formation, and fraternity. In this context, Br. Fabio offered a reflection centred on five key words that begin with the letter “C”: contemplation, communion, charism, communication, and compassion. She invited the Sisters not to lose sight of their origins, to cherish their love for the charism of the first mothers who arrived in India and to walk clearly towards the definitive goal, eternal life, living communion and compassion every day with greater depth.

The Jubilee program also included formative and cultural moments. Br. Charles Arulanandam, OFM, Assistant to the Poor Clares, animated an activity on Cor Orans, and offered a space in which each community presented “The beauty of my monastery”, sharing traits of their life and history. In another talk, Br. Praveen, OFM, presented a reflection from a letter from the Minister General in the context of the eighth Centenary of the Transit of St. Francis, highlighting the image of the seed that continues to sprout in the life of the Franciscan Family. There was also no lack of artistic and musical expressions in honour of St. Clare, which helped to contemplate, through beauty, the gift of vocation.

The Jubilee Eucharist, celebrated on the 13th February, crowned these days of gratitude. Br. Fabio presided over the Mass, concelebrated by friars of the Order, who are linked to the spiritual accompaniment of the communities. The homily, delivered by Br. Arok Sun-



der, OFM, helped to reread the path travelled with a gaze of faith and to renew the commitment to walk in hope. After the celebration, the Sisters danced and offered gestures of gratitude, and a fraternal lunch was shared, a sign of the evangelical joy and unity that sustains the contemplative life.

This Silver Jubilee, lived around the visit of the General Delegate *pro monialibus*, leaves a sign of gratitude and renewed enthusiasm. In a Church called to walk in communion, the life of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare continues to be a silent and eloquent witness: a lamp lit in prayer, a heart open to compassion and a space where fraternity becomes prophecy.

May the Lord sustain these communities and make their entrustment fruitful, so that, in the simplicity of the Gospel, they may continue to illuminate the path of the People of God.

Franciscan Bookmark



Frate Francesco

Stella di un mattino che non tramonta



Fr. Fabio
Nardelli, OFM

Tau Editrice

La Trinità e il mondo nelle Collationes in Hexaëmeron di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio



Matteo Curina

Edizioni
Studium

Il libro degli angeli

L'angelologia di Francesc Eiximenis



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

Director: Br. Byron A. Chamann Anléu OFM

Translators: Br. John Luke OFM, Br. Arthur Andersen OFM, Br. Rick Martignetti OFM

OFM

Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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