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VI OFM Under Ten Chapter of Mats - Assisi, 2026

4-12 July 2026

The VI OFM Under Ten Chapter of Mats will be held in Assisi, Italy, from 4 to 12 July 2026, in a context of particular significance for the entire Franciscan Family: the commemoration of the eight hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi. This anniversary offers an opportunity to renew the spirit that inspired the mission of the Poverello and to rediscover the vitality of a vocation which, through the centuries, continues to generate fraternity, service, and hope in the world.

The gathering brings together friars of the Order of Friars Minor with fewer than ten years of solemn profession, coming from the various Entities and Conferences of the Order. In this commemorative and jubilee context, the Chapter of Mats presents itself as a privileged space to live international fraternity in a concrete way, to discern the challenges of our time, and to rekindle the Franciscan missionary commitment in today's world.

Discover all the information and history of the Under Ten Chapters on www.ofm.org



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Government of the Order

Brazil, Minister General's visit to the Custody of Our Lady of the Seven Rejoicings *Br. Massimo welcomes the solemn profession of three friars*



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From the 21st-23rd April, 2026, the Franciscan Custody of Our Lady of the Seven Joys welcomed the visit of the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. César Kulkamp. The visitors arrived on the evening of April 21 in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, in west-central Brazil.

The presence of the Minister General takes place at a moment of profound significance for the entire Franciscan Family: The Franciscan Jubilee Year, celebrated as a time of grace, remembrance and renewal of the charism left by St. Francis of Assisi. In this context, the visit acquired an even more special value, becoming a concrete sign of communion with the entire Order and of renewed zeal in living the Gospel. On April 22, important moments of communion and animation took place: meetings with aspirants, formators and friars with temporary vows, a meeting with all the friars of the Custody, and a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Br. César Kulkamp.

During the meeting with the friars, held at the Retreat House of the Convent of São Francisco in Campo Grande, the Minister General thanked them for their witness and missionary service carried out in the Custody, emphasising in particular their work in the health sectors, with indigenous peoples and in social service. In his exhortation, he encouraged the friars to cultivate a contemplative and fraternal life, where mission and contem-

plation go hand in hand. Br. Massimo also recalled Jesus Christ's invitation not to fear the challenges and changes of the present times, urging the friars to respond with hope and courage, faithfully living the evangelical counsels. In conclusion, he emphasised that the entire Order is united and close to the Custody in its pastoral and missionary service.

On April 23, the solemn Eucharistic celebration took place in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, during which the Minister General received the solemn profession of Br. Edson Roberto Andrade, Br. Maicon Custódio de Jesus da Silva and Br. Matiel de Oliveira Bernabé.

After the celebration, a meeting was held with the Poor Clare Sisters of the Monastery of Santa Maria dos Anjos in Dourados and, in the afternoon, a meeting with the Council of the Custody and visits to the Health Centre of São Francisco and the Hospital of São Julião, run by the friars.

The visit of the Minister General and the Definitor General was a privileged moment of listening, accompaniment, and closeness, in which the Order made itself present alongside the concrete reality of the Custody, encouraging the friars in fraternal life, in the care of formation and in the necessary renewal of life and evangelising activities.

*Br. Edson Roberto Andrade and Br. Aluísio Alves,
OFM*

Visit of the Minister General to the Province of St. Francis of Assisi *Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, April 19-21*



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Between the 19th and 21st April 2026, the fraternal visit of the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, to the Province of St. Francis of Assisi in Brazil took place. The Minister was accompanied by Br. César Kulkamp, OFM, Definitor General.

The visit began on Sunday, the 19th April, when Br. Massimo went in the morning to the Monastery of the Poor Clares of São Damião in Porto Alegre. A meeting with the nuns was held in the monastery, and the Eucharist was celebrated with the community. In the afternoon, he met with the friars responsible for formation and vocation animation. During the meeting, the friars shared some of the realities and challenges of their work and mission with young people and vocations in the southern region of Brazil, which is characterised by a strongly secularised culture.

In the late afternoon, the Minister General participated in a meeting with representatives of the parishes served by the friars, representatives of Franciscan social works, members of the Secular Franciscan Order and the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Aparecida. In a fraternal atmosphere, some experiences gained in these areas of presence were shared, together with the perception of the Franciscan charism in these missionary fronts.

Subsequently, the Minister General presided over the opening Mass of the Franciscan Jubilee Year in the Province of St. Francis of Assisi, which in this year 2026 celebrates the centenary of the arrival of the first Dutch missionaries who founded

the Province, and also the fiftieth anniversary of the Province of St. Francis of Assisi. At the end of the Mass, celebrated in the Parish of St. Francis in Porto Alegre, Br. Massimo Fusarelli blessed the “Pilgrim Tau” that will travel to all the Franciscan sites linked to the mission of the Province. After the Eucharistic celebration, a meeting was held in the parish hall with the participation of the whole community.



On April 20, the Minister General met with all the friars of the Province. The meeting took place at the São João Batista Seminary in Santa Cruz do Sul. At the beginning of the meeting, the friars were welcomed by the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Santa Cruz do Sul, Msgr. Aloísio Alberto Dilli, OFM. Next, the Minister Provincial, Br. Olávio José Dotto, OFM, presented some aspects of the mission and the challenges of the provincial journey. Br. Massimo presented his letter to the friars in response

General Curia Agenda



- ☑ From the 4th to the 8th of May, the Tempo Forte will be held in the General Curia.
- ☑ On the 9th May, the fraternity will celebrate the feast of St. Mary Mediatrix.
- ☑ From the 11th to the 19th of May, the General Definitory will meet the new Ministers and Custodes of the Order in the Curia.

- ☑ On the 6th May, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will have an online meeting with the Under Ten friars of Asia; on the 10th May he will be in Meta di Sorrento (NA – Italy) for the opening of the bicentenary of the birth of the Venerable Br. Simpliciano of the Nativity, OFM. On the 20th and 21st May, he will be in Molfetta (BA – Italy) for the Feast of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Puglia and Molise.

to the Provincial Chapter held in October 2025. Immediately afterwards, the friars met to reflect on the points raised by the Minister General. In an atmosphere of open dialogue, exchanges of hope and encouragement for the continuation of the Franciscan mission took place, considering the need for a re-evaluation, the question of vocations and the different realities and challenges that the Order is facing around the world. The day ended with Mass and the departure of the “Pil-

grim Tau” for Uruguay, where the friars have a mission program. On April 21, the last day of the visit, the Minister General celebrated the Eucharist at the Fraternity of Mount Alverne, where the elderly and infirm friars reside. After Mass, Br. Massimo and Br. César met with the Provincial Definitory. The visit to the Province ended with a pleasant meeting with the Fraternity at the provincial headquarters.

The Minister General's visit to Province of the Assumption of the BVM of the Río de la Plata *San Antonio de Arredondo, Córdoba, Argentina, 15–18 April 2026*



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From the 15th to the 18th of April 2026, the Franciscan Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Río de la Plata in Argentina and Paraguay, founded in 1612, joyfully welcomed the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM. From the moment of his arrival, his presence was characterised by the style typical of the Franciscan charism: walking alongside the friars, listening to their stories and sharing in the daily life of the fraternities. The friars experienced the closeness of one who does not arrive as a distant authority, but as a brother walking with his fraternity. He was accompanied by the General Definitory for Latin America, Br. César Külkamp, OFM, expresses shared responsibility in the governance of the Order and communion in mission.

At the Franciscan Residence of San Antonio de Arredondo, in Córdoba, friars from across the Province gathered: alongside the Provincial Minister, Br. Emilio Andrada, OFM, there were brothers from the Southern Zone and CABA, Santa Fe Cen-

tral, Córdoba Capital, Mendoza, NEA, Corrientes, NOA and Paraguay. The Poor Clares of the Southern Cone and the Franciscan Third Order Sisters of Córdoba also took part. The format was simple in protocol yet rich in fraternal presence: a welcome, a presentation of the Province, Eucharistic celebrations, a dialogue assembly, group work and opportunities for personal encounter, all combining prayer, reflection, and shared discernment.

The visit had several objectives: to encourage fraternal life, to listen to the concrete reality of the Province and to strengthen communion within the Order. As the Minister General put it: “To meet with you, to listen to you and to share our Franciscan life.”

On the first day, Br. Massimo invited everyone to look at life through “spiritual eyes” – in the words of St Clare – capable of recognising the presence of God in oneself and in one’s brothers and sisters. His message was clear: light, like love, is not kept



to oneself; by giving it away, it grows. The fraternity is the place where faith is lived and passed on. The following day, Br. César Kulkamp invited us to rediscover the freedom that springs from the encounter with the Risen One: not based on one's own courage, but on the witness of a life touched by the Gospel. "Whoever has seen the Risen One cannot live as if they had not seen him."

In the garden of the House, surrounded by nature, the commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the passing of St Francis was celebrated. In this jubilee year, the anniversary reaffirmed a shared conviction: the Franciscan charism does not belong to the past; it takes root in every fraternity and in every act of service.

The conclusions of the meeting confirmed this: the fraternity is the place where the mission is discerned and where we learn to walk together in hope. This is expressed in the testimony of Br. Pablo González Pacheco: "I have come to meet you, to listen to your stories, and I leave with a heart full of hope. The Province possesses great riches". The visit concluded with a meeting between the Minister General and the Provincial Definitors, and with a clear message: Where there is life, there is hope.

With the contribution of the Provincial Communications Office – Franciscan Province of the Assumption, Argentina-Paraguay. Coordinator: Br. Arnol Aquino, OFM. Communications Officer: Rosana Triunfetti.

Visit of the Minister General to the Provinces of Peru

Lima, 11th –14th April 2026



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In Lima, Peru, from the 11th –14th April, 2026, the fraternal visit of the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, to the two Franciscan Provinces of the country: the Franciscan Province of the XII Apostles of Peru and the Missionary Province of St. Francis Solano of Peru took place.

The Minister General was accompanied by Br. César Kulkamp, OFM, Definitor General, and was also able to count on the participation of the Delegate General for both Provinces, Br. Mario Wilson Ramos Novoa, OFM. During the visit, he met with the provincial governments, the sisters of contemplative life, the friars in formation and formators, as well as the friars of both provinces and members of the Franciscan Family.

The meetings took place in a fraternal atmosphere, marked by prayer, reflection, and dialogue on the current reality of the Franciscan presence in Peru. The openness and closeness of Br. Massimo and Br. César fostered a climate of trust, making it possible to achieve significant results that will contribute to the strengthening of the mission throughout the country.

The visit began on Saturday, the 11th April at St Francis' friary in Lima, where the Minister General was cordially welcomed by members of both Provinces. Subsequently, the solemn opening Mass was celebrated with the participation of the faithful.

On Sunday, the 12th April, the Minister General presided over the Eucharist in the Santa Clara Monastery in Lima together with the Poor Clare and Conceptionist nuns. On Monday the 13th April,



in the morning, he met with the Definitors of both Provinces; in the afternoon, at the friary of the *Descalzos*, in the Rímac, he shared a fraternal meeting with those in formation and their formators. On Tuesday, the 14th April, after Lauds, he held a meeting with all the friars. In the afternoon, he met with members of the Franciscan Family, OFS, JUFRA and religious.

The visit ended with the celebration of the closing Mass, during which the friars of temporary profession renewed their vows.

Canonical Visitation to the Fraternity of Penitentiaries at St. John Lateran

April 17–19, 2026



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From 17 to 19 April 2026, the Canonical Visitation to the Fraternity of the House of Penitentiaries in St. John Lateran took place. The Visitor General was Br. Konrad Cholewa, OFM, the Definitor General.

The Lateran Fraternity is composed of eight friars from seven different countries of the world: Mexico, Italy, Poland, Malta, the Philippines, the Ivory Coast, Syria. At the beginning of the visit, Br. Konrad met with the Major Penitentiary, Cardinal An-

gelo De Donatis, who is the first person in charge of the mission of the Penitentiary Friars. A special moment during the visit was also the meeting with the community of the Oblate Sisters of Santa Marta, who collaborate in the service of the Friars Minor at the Lateran.

The visit took place in an atmosphere of listening, accompaniment, and fraternal sharing, according to the spirit of St. Francis: “The Lord gave me brothers”. The three days of mutual listening were characterised by intense moments of liturgical prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist as the centre of fraternal life, and the service of confessions, culminating in the Chapter of the Visitation.

The Visitor emphasized the richness of the Fraternity in its international dimension as a gift to be cultivated through an ever deeper mutual knowledge. He also highlighted that fraternal life, and the sacrament of reconciliation are the “two lungs” of the Lateran community that should always breathe together.

The mission entrusted to the Penitentiaries is a concrete witness to mercy, reconciliation, and service in the universal Church.

The Lateran Fraternity lived this time of the Visit as a grace, in a spirit of simplicity and truth, accepting the indications received to grow in the charity that illuminates their daily ministry.

The Friars Minor have served as Penitentiaries in the Lateran since the time of Pope Pius V in the sixteenth century.

Tempo Forte



Communiqué Tempo Forte



*Ordo Fratrum Minorum
Secretarius Generalis*

The Communiqué of the General Definitory relating to Tempo Forte for March 2026 has been published.

Download PDF: [Italiano](#) - [English](#) - [Español](#)

Reflections by Br. Massimo

April 2026



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In the Amazon and Peru, some cultural evenings offered me a particularly intense experience: traditional dances in which colours, rhythms and movements become a surprising synthesis between indigenous cultures and European heritage, merged today in a very vivid mosaic. Participating in these moments is deeply striking you immediately understand that it is not just folklore but living culture.

Thinking back to those moments, I realised that a discreet thread ran through the entire journey of this month, between Brazil, Peru and Argentina. It wasn't obvious at first. It emerged little by little, in the faces, in the places, in the stories encountered along the way.

In Brazil, I travelled through very different worlds – from the mining lands of Minas Gerais to the Amazon, from the Northeast to Mato Grosso, up to the South – meeting friars, Poor Clare sisters, and many Secular Franciscans. Then Peru and Argentina, in Córdoba: other faces, other voices. A continent that escapes any synthesis.

Yet, right within this variety, something returns.

It is perceived by entering an ancient convent, observing a façade, and stopping in front of an image of popular piety. An interweaving of stories: indigenous traces, Franciscan memory, Iberian heritage. Nothing has remained the same at the beginning. And perhaps this is precisely the point: the charism, encountering these lands, has taken on a new face, without losing its source.



It can also be sensed in the encounters: in the simplicity of fraternities, in closeness to the poor, in a faith with many languages. As if, over the centuries, the friars had learned to speak with different accents, becoming – between openness and fatigue – part of these peoples.

There is no shortage of efforts. In some regions, especially among native peoples, the distance remains. The sense of time, of the relationship with creation, of us before the individual, is different. Approaching religious life - with its Western imprint - requires time, patience, and delicacy. The native friars are few. By welcoming them, we can allow a different fraternal and missionary life to grow, more integrated into cultures. Paths that cannot be forced.

And yet, here too a deeper intuition emerges: the Gospel never arrives in an empty land. The Spirit precedes, sows, and prepares. And often we are the ones who must learn to recognise, even before explaining.

Perhaps this is what I perceived most strongly: evangelising is not first of all bringing something but letting oneself be reached. Stop, listen, receive. Discovering

that the encounter changes even those who thought they had come to give.

Our time is not very different from that of Francis, as the Decree of the Centenary year we are living reminds us. He, too, has crossed borders, met other worlds, learning – not without effort – to receive before offering.

This continent remembers him, with a quiet and intense force at the same time.

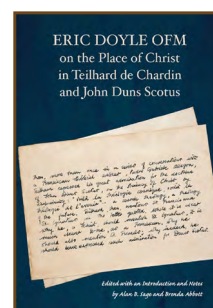
The mission is not to export a model.

It is letting ourselves be changed by the encounter, in the trust that the Spirit precedes us, already at work in every culture, in every face.

Franciscan Bookmark



Eric Doyle OFM:
The Place of Christ
in Teilhard de Chardin
and John Duns Scotus



Edited with an
Introduction and Notes
by Alan B. Sage
and Brenda Abbott
Franciscan Publishing



Franciscan Centenaries

Proposal for the World Week of the Poor 2026

Letter by the Ministers General of the Franciscan Family



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Dear brothers and sisters,

On the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi, we wish to propose an initiative focusing on the poor and all forms of poverty.

We have drawn inspiration from the "Mission to the Poor", which is being organized in Rome from November 9 to 15, 2026, coinciding with World Day of the Poor. Following in the footsteps of Francis – who, having arrived in Rome as a pilgrim to the



tomb of the Apostle Peter, gave his clothes to the most needy, spending the entire day among the poor with joyful spirit – we

wish to bear witness that it is possible, even today, to give voice to the reality of the poor, to listen to them rather than simply speak about them, and to carry out together a prophetic gesture that tells the Church and society that the preferential option for the poor is not an optional choice, but belongs to the very essence of our Franciscan charism and of being Christians.

Read the full text of the Letter:

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

COTAF Brothers in Formation Pilgrimage

On the occasion of the Franciscan Jubilee



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As part of the celebration activities of the 800th Franciscan Jubilee, some of the young friars from the Conference of the Transalpine Franciscans (COTAF) gathered at the Hungarian novitiate house in Szécsény from 23 to 26 April

2026. Among the participants there were postulants, novices, simple professed friars and their formators coming from Austria, Switzerland, Transylvania (Romania) and Hungary. Also some brothers from the Slovakian Province with their formator joined the pilgrimage.

Br. Gabriel Szoliva, formation director from Hungary, presided the opening Holy Eucharist and Br. Erik Urban, Minister Provincial of St. Steven King Province preached. In his homily he invited the young brothers to walk along this same path, as Francis did; sometimes it can be an easy path, sometimes it can be tired, dusty, in silence or in conversation –but it may be enough to notice each others presence along this path.

Right after mass the brothers started the 28 kilometers pilgrimage towards The Marian National Shrine Mátraverebély-Szentkút. During the walk there was a time to pray, to meditate in silence and there was a time for sharing. Br. Marco Mendoza, from the Pontifical Marian Academy, shared with the students about the maternal presence of the Virgin Mary since the early

beginnings of the Order. At the arrival the local community of friars welcomed the group. The second day of the pilgrimage, Br. Darko Tepert, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, presided the mass and in his homily he shared that initial formation is not a time for appearing perfect, it is the school where the Lord transforms weakness into witness. On the 28 kilometers way back home, the brothers had again the

opportunity to pray and contemplate nature. The gathering concluded with the Sunday mass celebrated with the faithful of the Parish of Szécsény

This event was possible through the generosity of the welcoming Province of Our Lady Queen of Hungary and Br. Lorand Portik-Lukács who coordinate the organization of this meaningful event.

Animation of the Order



International JPIC Course 2026 PUA, 18-24 May 2026



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The General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), in collaboration with the Pontifical University Antonianum (PUA) in Rome, will hold the annual International JPIC Course from the 18th to the 24th of May 2026. This course is a key training opportunity for strengthening the Franciscan mission in today's world. The course, primarily aimed at new JPIC facilitators within the Order and the Franciscan Family, takes place within a particularly significant commemorative context: the celebration of the last two Franciscan centenaries, that of the Canticle of the Creatures and that of the Death or Passing of St. Francis of Assisi. Both events are deeply connected by the verse added by Francis himself to his Canticle: "Praised be You, my Lord, through our sister bodily death."

Under the title "From the Canticle of the Creatures to the Easter of St Francis of Assisi," the 2026 International JPIC Course seeks to offer a contemporary and engaged reading of the great challenges of our time, in light of Franciscan spirituality and the Gospel. In his letter of invitation, the Minister General of the Order emphasises that these centenaries "have inspired many reflections that now form part of our social life and our mission," and presents the course as a privileged opportunity to continue deepening this formative and pastoral path.

Formation for Action in Justice, Peace, and Care for Creation

The Annual JPIC Course provides perspectives for analysis and action on socio-environmental justice and peace, intended for an audience that will

apply the theoretical and practical content in their outreach work and in the specific tasks entrusted to them in their fraternities, Provinces, and local contexts.

In line with the guidelines approved at the last JPIC International Council (Assisi, 2025), the course is structured around three main lines of action:

- the pursuit of justice for migrants and refugees,
- the promotion of peace in a world marked by violence,
- and the commitment to ending the destruction of creation.

An Integrated and Experiential Structure

The training program is organised into four main parts:

The first offers an updated perspective on the global and local challenges related to human mobility, armed conflict, and the socio-environmental crisis.

The second part proposes a philosophical, theological, and Franciscan interpretation of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus and St. Francis as the foundation of the Christian commitment to justice, peace, and



the integrity of creation. The third section presents concrete, positive experiences of Franciscan fraternities already working in these areas across different regions of the world. Within this framework, a visit to Assisi is also planned, including a tour of the Porziuncola and the tomb of St. Francis, sites of particular significance in the context of the centenary. Finally, throughout the course, participatory planning tools will be offered, using a synodal approach, aimed at generating processes of change, influence, and impact through JPIC animation.

An open invitation to the Franciscan Family

The Minister General expressly encourages participation in this course, “particularly for those

who are beginning this service,” and invites members of the Franciscan Family, lay people, and young people to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen the shared commitment to living the Gospel today through a shared mission.

The 2026 International JPIC Course will have simultaneous translation into English, Italian, and Spanish.

For more information, contact the JPIC General Office at pax@ofm.org.

Download the programme:

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



Chapters

Chapter of the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Croatia

Samobor, 20-24 April 2026



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The Eucharistic celebration presided over by Br. Tomaž Hočevar, Visitor General and President of the Chapter, in the Franciscan Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Samobor (Croatia), concluded the celebrations of the 43rd Chapter of the Franciscan Province of Saints Cyril

and Methodius in Croatia, held at the Tabor House of Prayer in Samobor from April 20 to 24, 2026. In the year of the great Jubilee of the Order - the eight hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Francis - the Chapter was held under the motto “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord again”.

The President of the Chapter thanked the brothers for making important decisions for the future of the Province, emphasising that the past must be left behind and we must look to the future. “In this Chapter, you have recognised the signs of the times, you have been able to listen to what the brothers say and what God wants. The choice of a young Definitory is a promise for the future and for the good of the Province”, added the Visitor General.

In the Chapter, the brothers examined the current state of the Province, the activities of the individual confraternities within it, as well as cooperation with the dependent Custody of St. Jerome - Zadar. They also proposed appropriate solutions for the improvement of the Province and discussed new initiatives and tasks of greater importance. In

its conclusions, the Chapter emphasised in particular the mission of the entire fraternity and of each individual brother in the field of evangelisation and the care of new spiritual vocations.

Currently, the Province has 161 friars, who work in 33 convents and parishes in Croatia, as well as in Serbia, Austria and Australia. The Franciscan Custody of St. Jerome - Zara, established a year ago and dependent on the Province, currently houses

35 elderly friars. The Chapter elected the new Minister Provincial, Br. Ivica Jagodić; the Vicar Provincial, Br. Mario Zubak; the Provincial Definitors: Br. Tomica Hruška, Br. Petar Cvekan, Br. Gabrijel Bošnjak, Br. Vjerman Lazić, Br. Marko Ćosić and Br. Vinko Brković.

“In times of great change, we want to remain faithful to the Gospel, cultivate fraternity, closeness to people, especially the little ones and the needy,

and joyfully proclaim Christ to modern man,” underlined the new Minister, Br. Ivica. The Eucharistic celebrations were presided over by: Br. Milan Krišto, former Minister Provincial; Br. Tomaž Hočevan, Visitor General and President of the Chapter; Br. Ivica Jagodić, new Minister Provincial; Br. Mario Zubak, new Vicar Provincial and Mons. Marko Kovač, auxiliary bishop of Zagreb.

Br. Siniša Pucić, OFM

Interim Provincial Chapter of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Poland *Leżajsk, 13-17 April 2026*



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From the 13th to 17th April 2026, the Interim Provincial Chapter of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Poland was held in Leżajsk. Forty friars took part in the proceedings, together with several guests with consultative votes and the General Definitor, Br. Konrad Cholewa, OFM.

The Chapter was held under the motto ‘*A morte in vitam*. From death to life (Jn 5:24)’, in reference to the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of As-

sisi. The Chapter was opened with Holy Mass presided over by Archbishop Adam Szal, Metropolitan of Przemyśl. Over the following days, the friars took part in spiritual conferences, liturgical celebrations and working sessions, reflecting on the pastoral challenges and future prospects of the Province and the Church. During the Chapter, the Provincial Definitors were elected for the new term of office. Together with the Provincial Minister and the Vicar, they will form the Government

of the Province. Those elected were: Br. Samuel Portka, OFM; Br. Lucjan Hozer, OFM; Br. Zacheusz Rapala, OFM; Br. Fabian Wikiera, OFM; Br. Kasjan Sadowski, OFM. The final document of the Chapter, the programme of ongoing formation and the letter to the friars of the Province were also presented and approved by the friars of the Chapter. The Provincial Chapter concluded with a Eucharistic celebration, during which the new Provincial Definitors took their oath.



Formation Course of Brazil and Southern Cone Conference

*First phase of the course for Formators, Animators,
ad Guardians concluded*



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From April 14 to 25, friars from Brazil and the Southern Cone gathered in Petrópolis (Brazil - RJ) for the first in-person stage of the Course for Formators, Animators, and Guardians of the Brazil and Southern Cone Conference. Organized by the Conference's Secretariat for Formation and Studies, the course was attended by 17 religious, including two Franciscan sisters from Amparo. Of the Franciscan Entities within the Conference, only the Custody of the Seven Joys and the Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile did not send formators. The formation program was structured as a hybrid format. Following these two weeks of in-person sessions, weekly online meetings will take place from late April through mid-August to explore topics in greater depth. The second in-person phase will occur during the last two weeks of August. From September through November, participants will be guided in the preparation of a final paper, delving deeper into a topic of particular interest. The course concludes on November 27.

The advisory board is diverse: it includes Franciscan friars of the Order of Friars Minor, Conventual Franciscan friars, other men and women religious, as well as laypeople, most of whom have extensive academic experience and expertise in the field of human formation. Since some participants and some advisors are Spanish speakers, participants are required to have a basic understanding of Spanish (for Brazilians) and Portuguese (for Spanish speakers).

The in-person sessions were organized in a progressive manner. In the first session, one week was dedicated to updating and deepening the constitutive elements of Franciscan consecrated life, and another to the role and identity of the formator. In the second in-person session, the first week will focus on candidates arriving at the houses of formation, culminating in a reflection on formation for mission.

The decision to include at least two in-person sessions is intended to foster interaction, camaraderie, and mutual understanding among participants. Although the online format offers advantages, nothing can replace face-to-face interaction and

the direct sharing of experiences. With this in mind, social activities were organized, such as a visit to the Christ the Redeemer Shrine in Rio de Janeiro and to the Parish of Our Lady of Boa Viagem in the Rocinha favela, where friars from the Province of the Immaculate work. There, participants spoke with the faithful, visited local chapels, and gained insight into the daily challenges faced by impoverished communities in large cities. Other opportunities for fraternal fellowship, beyond the classroom, are planned throughout the in-person sessions.



At the end, upon submission of the Final Project, participants will receive a certificate for the Extension Course, awarded by the Franciscan Theological Institute of Petrópolis. It is hoped that this formation will help prepare Formators, Guardians, and Animators who are conscious of their mission, enlightened by the content they have received and, at the same time, challenged by the difficulties that drive human growth and maturation. May they, on the path of discernment, have the wisdom to accompany, the patience to wait, and the courage to form in freedom. And may their lives, following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, become a living Gospel for all those entrusted to them.

Br. Sandro Roberto da Costa, OFM

*Secretary for Formation and Studies - Conference
of Brazil and the Southern Cone*

Formation Meeting of Friars 40+ at Mount Saint Anne, Poland *Secretariat for Formation and Studies of the North Slavic Conference (SLAN)*



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On April 21–22, the first formation meeting for Friars 40+ took place at Mount Saint Anne, organized by the Secretariat for Formation and Studies of the North Slavic Conference (SLAN). Religious from five Franciscan Polish Provinces, aged between 40 and 55, took part in the meeting.

The aim of the gathering was to renew their belonging to the Order and to pause from daily duties in order to reflect on life and vocation. It was a time of listening – often quiet yet constant – to the cry of the world calling for the light of truth and the warmth of love, as well as a return to the roots of their personal “yes” given to God years ago.

An important part of the program was group work, which provided an opportunity to rediscover how the Poor Man of Assisi understood his life and vocation. This reflection led participants to deepen their gratitude to God for the gift of life and vocation and to relate Franciscan spirituality to their own experience of faith. The meeting had the character of fraternal strengthening and shared listen-

ing to the Spirit. The program was enriched by a lecture given by Mr. Roman Solecki. The Eucharist was presided over and the meeting led by Br. Oskar Macciacyk, who emphasized in his homily the importance of interpersonal communication in community life.



Meeting of the Guardians of the houses of the Province of St. Hedwig *Wambierzyce (Poland), April 13-15, 2026*



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From April 13 to 15, 2026, at the Sanctuary of Mary, Queen of Families in Wambierzyce (diocese of Świdnica), a formation meeting was held for the Guardians of the houses of the Province of St. Hedwig of the Order of Friars Minor in Poland.

The Provincial Minister, Br. Alard Maliszewski, OFM, presided at the meeting. Monday evening, Br. Konrad Cholewa, OFM, Definitor General, held an introductory lecture on the role of the Guardian in the life of the fraternity, connecting online with the participants. After a short break, the participants met Br. Tomaz Chmielewski OSPPE, Prior of the Paolini convent in Wrocław, who in the conference entitled “The poverty of the electronic portfolio”, tried to reconcile the ideas of the vow of poverty with the reality of the daily life of consecrated persons.

The following morning was dedicated to the sharing of experiences related to the celebration of the eighth centenary of the death of St. Francis in our communities. The brothers presented the initiatives which they had undertaken or planned in their own convents to honor the current jubilee year and invite others to promote similar initiatives.

The next thematic block was dedicated to the financial and the staffing situation of the Province. The community of Guardians discussed the future of some places and works, looking for optimal solutions for such realities. The afternoon was dominated by the issue of financial transparency in our province, but also of the individual houses and individual friars. The provincial minister presented his suggestions, which the brothers commented on in reference to their own fraternities.



Tuesday's last thematic block revolved around the issue of the administration of religious goods in light of the ever-evolving norms of state law.

The third day was dedicated to the liturgical life of our religious communities. This was done, thanks to our guest, Br. Dominik Ostrowski, priest of the diocese of Świdnica, as well as consultor of the Commission for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments of the Polish episcopal conference and vice-rector for the scientific and educational affairs at the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Wrocław. Br. Dominick passionately presented a session entitled "The liturgy as a school of maturity of the community", in which he referred to the link between the maturity of the priest/religious and the way of celebrating and living the liturgy. In addition, he provided some valuable advice on controversial liturgical issues.

Concluding the meeting, Br. Alard draw up a balance sheet of the day and presented the next appointments of our provincial community.

The meeting of the Guardians, despite having a predominately formative dimension, is also an occasion of common prayer; for this reason the brothers were constantly accompanied by the prayer of the Breviary, the Eucharistic celebration in communion, the recitation of the Crown of Divine Mercy, and the celebration of the Via Lucis. Besides, it was an opportunity for an informal exchange of experiences, to share the concerns and joy related to the responsibilities of the Guardian, as well as to momentarily step away from daily tasks.

The meeting was organized by the Office of Ongoing Formation of the Province of St. Hedwig.

Francesco Live 2026 in Florence

Young people launch an appeal for an unarmed peace



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From the 17th to 19th April 2026, Florence hosted the Francesco Live Meeting, promoted by the Franciscan Family of Tuscany, which brought together over 700 young people under the motto "Beyond the limit, peace". In the context of the eighth centenary of the Transit of St. Francis, the meeting wanted to reinterpret the extreme situations of our time as a place where humanity

is decided: not only a paralysing frontier, but also a threshold of conversion, dialogue and hope, in communion with the local Church and with the desire for a more peaceful future.

The opening of the festival, in the Salone dei Cinquecento of Palazzo Vecchio, was marked by the intervention of Br. Matteo Brena, OFM, who presented the cente-

nary as a "transit" that invites us to look, inhabit and cross limits. This horizon was marked by the institutional greetings of Letizia Perini, councillor for youth policies, and Eugenio Giani, president of the Tuscany Region, who emphasised the link between the region's tradition of peace and Franciscan inspiration. In the same context, the words of Br. Roberto Pasolini, OFMCap,

preacher of the Papal Household, helped dismantle the idea that limits are only defeated, while Eugenio's musical presence in Via Di Gioia offered a language of beauty and care for creation, capable of combining reflection and celebration.

On the second day, the city remained a "laboratory" of thought and listening. The morning opened with the energy of Lorenzo Baglioni, who accompanied the young people with songs and dialogue, introducing the day's themes with lightness and depth. The program was enriched with voices from journalism, culture and social reflection, and a broader look at contemporary conflicts thanks to the contributions of Greta Cristini, geopolitical analyst, and Msgr. Rodolfo Cetoloni, OFM, bishop emeritus

of Grosseto and vice president of the John Paul II Foundation. A dialogue was also held between the Custos of the Holy Land, Br. Francesco Ielpo, OFM, and Agnese Pini, director of QN. At a time when war and suffering seem to impose a feeling of powerlessness, Br. Ielpo recalled that recognising one's own limitations is not resignation, but a journey towards a truer humanity: "Experiencing that you are not the saviour of the world helps us to be even more human, more profoundly human." From the concrete experience of those who accompany people wounded by conflicts, he insisted on the fact that we are not asked to do the impossible, but to be faithful to the simple gestures of care, capable of sustaining even a single family, a single person, as a real seed of peace.

In the urban fabric of Florence, meanwhile, the "I listen to you" points between Piazza della Signoria, San Firenze and Santa Croce remained open, with the presence of friars, nuns, psychologists, and counsellors, offering a space for the wounds of the heart and mind to be welcomed. An invocation for peace was also held on the steps of San Miniato al Monte, with the participation of organisations such as Rondine Cittadella della Pace, the John Paul II Foundation, the Youth Ministry of the Archdiocese of Florence and the La Pira Centre. In this same horizon, the testimonies of young people from lands wounded by war were heard.

In conclusion, in the Basilica of Santa Croce, the young people delivered their final document to the institutions: a stance against rearmament—"to hear the word 'rearmament' coming from the most representative minds of the continent is a shame"—and an invitation to build an "unarmed and disarming" peace, inspired by the gesture of Francis of Assisi who in 1221 sought dialogue with the Sultan; the manifesto also called for dignity in the cities in the face of precariousness, proposed to the mayor Sara Funaro the creation of a "permanent table of young people, believers and non-believers" in the wake of Giorgio La Pira and collected the opening of the MEP Dario Nardella to invite a delegation of Francesco Live to the European Parliament, in a closing accompanied by Irene Sanesi, Br. Franco Buonamano and the Eucharist presided over by Archbishop Gherardo Gambelli with Br. Livio Crisci and Br. Antonio Picciallo.

Read the [Final Message](#)

See alla [photos on Flickr](#)



LIFE in the Order



Solemn professions

25th April, Prov. St. Francis Stigmatized (Italy)

Br. Alberto Ellati and Br. Gianfranco Rollo



Deceased Brothers

† 23rd April: Br. Simeon (Jožef) Mavec, Prov. Holy Cross (Slovenia).

† 22nd April: Br. Baltazar (Bartłomiej Adam) Walkiewicz and Br. Modest (Zdzisław) Wieczorek, Prov. St. Francis of Assisi (Poland).

† 16th April: Br. Carolus (Atsushi) Shoji, Prov. Holy Martyrs of Japan (Japan); Br. James Villa, Prov. Immaculate Conception (USA).

† 15th April: Br. Diarmaid (John Peter) Ó Riain, Prov. of Ireland.

† 14th April: Br. Carlos Sáez Peretó, Prov. Immaculate Conception (Spain).

† 11th April: Br. Bernward Syukur Nicolas (Nicolas M J A Syukur) Dister, Prov. Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands).

† 6th April: Benedikt (Vladimír) Holota, Prov. St. Wenceslas (Czech Republic).

† 26th March: Br. Raymond Mailhiot, Prov. Holy Spirit (Canada)

† 15th March: Br. Biagio Baldino, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

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OFM

Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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