

“VOI SIETE
TUTTI FRATELLI”

(Mt 23,8 • Rnb 22,33)

“TODOS USTEDES
SON HERMANOS”

(Mt 23,8 • Rnb 22,33)

“YOU ARE
ALL BROTHERS”

(Mt 23,8 • Rnb 22,33)



VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten OFM - Assisi 2026

Young friars from all over the world gathered in the sign of fraternity



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From the 4th to 12th July, the VI Chapter of Mats for the Under Ten OFM was held in Assisi: 135 friars with less than ten years of solemn profession, from the five continents, met at the Portiuncula, together with the General Government of the Order, to experience a time of listening, discernment, and international fraternity.

In the commemorative and jubilee context of the VIII Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis, the Chapter of Mats was a privileged space to concretely live international fraternity, discern the challenges of the present time and revive Franciscan missionary commitment in the contemporary world. Amongst the objectives of the meeting, it was certainly achieved that of bringing together friars from different regions of the world to allow them to experience the beauty of a fraternity that transcends borders, languages, and cultural contexts, in order to rediscover the Franciscan

missionary vocation, in order to promote peace and the presence of solidarity in the peripheries of the world. From the synodal-style meeting and shared discernment, concrete proposals emerged to be offered to the Entities, Conferences, and the General Chapter of 2027.

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ON THE **22ND JULY**, A **SPECIAL ISSUE** OF FRATERNITAS WILL BE PUBLISHED ENTIRELY DEDICATED TO THE **CHAPTER OF MATS UNDER TEN.**



Government of the Order

Minister General's visit of fraternity and hope to Ukraine

Closeness to the population and communion in the Order



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In recent days, the Franciscan community in Ukraine has experienced a time of profound grace and consolation. The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, made an official visit to the country, accompanied by Br. Konrad Grzegorz Cholewa, Definitor General, and Br. Franco Mirri, Director of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation. This trip represented a tangible sign of solidarity and closeness on the part of all universal fraternity, united in prayer and in the incessant desire for



peace for the Ukrainian nation. The first stop of the visit took place at the convent of Sudova Vyshnya. Here, the friars, in addition to sharing the joy of the meeting with the local community, visited some disadvantaged families of the parish, bringing them material and spiritual comfort.

Subsequently, the guests went to the convent of Zhytomyr, where a fraternal moment of dialogue and assembly was held with the friars of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel. The day then continued with the solemn Eucharistic celebration, celebrated together with the friars of the Province, in the parish church of St. John of Dukla. After Mass and the subsequent moment of fraternal lunch, an event of great importance took place: the Minister General blessed the "House of St. Francis" adjacent to the convent. It is a structure of great social and ecclesial importance which, in the near future, will house a rehabilitation centre for soldiers and their families, a Christian student residence and a pastoral centre for Franciscan Youth.

The journey continued to Sharhorod to get to know the activities of the local convent up close. After the celebration of the Liturgy, the friars met and talked with refugees and internally displaced persons from eastern Ukraine, during the usual distribution of food parcels, sharing the listening of their dramatic testimonies. Particularly touching was also the visit to the "Nazareth" children's centre, where the children gave the Roman guests a warm and joyful welcome.

On the way to the next stop, the friars of the General Curia stopped in Husiatyn to visit the local community. On this occasion, they were able to observe the state of the restoration work of the ancient complex of the Bernardine convent and the church of St. Anthony, carried

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out under the careful and passionate guidance of Br. Mykhailo Bahinskyi.

The visit ended in Ternopil, where the Minister General and his companions met with the Franciscan friars of the Byzantine rite of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. A moment of the highest ecumenical and fraternal value was the solemn Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine rite, concelebrated by the guests of Rome

together with their Greek-Catholic confreres. This common prayer testified once again to the richness of the Franciscan charism, which, beyond the ritual differences, gathers around the one Altar, instilling hope and renewed vigour to continue to serve the people of God in these times of trial.

With the contribution of Br. Cristian Kryvakivskyi, OFM

General Curia Agenda



- ☑ From the 14th to 18th July, the International Council for Formation and Studies will be held in the General Curia, in which the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, will also participate on the 15th July.
- ☑ On July 22, Br. Massimo will participate online in the meeting of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Missionaries of Royalty.
- ☑ Until July 24, Tempo Forte will be held in the General Curia.
- ☑ From the 25th to the 30th of July, the Minister General and his Definitory will carry out the annual assessment in Zakopane (Poland).
- ☑ From the 1st to 6th August, Br. Massimo will be in Assisi: on 1 August, at Our Lady of the Angels, he will preside over the opening Holy Mass of the Pardon of Assisi 2026; on the 2nd, he will celebrate the Feast of The Pardon of Assisi and welcome the arrival of the Franciscan Youth March; from the 3rd to 6th he will participate in the GO! Franciscan Youth Meeting, the meeting of the young people of Europe that will also host Pope Leo XIV on 6 August.

Visit of the Minister General to Olsztyn, Poland

Celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the presence of the OFM in the area



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As part of the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the presence of the OFM in the Zatorze district of Olsztyn, Poland, the fraternity of Friars Minor welcomed the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, from the 27th to 29th June 2026, accompanied by the Definitor General of the area, Br. Konrad Cholewa and Br. Franco Mirri, Director of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation. The central moment of the visit was the Celebration of a Solemn Mass on Sunday, the 28th June, in the church of Christ the King, presided over by the Minister General. At the beginning of his homily, Br. Massimo emphasised that a jubilee is not simply the memory of past events, but above all a time of thanksgiving for the work that God continues to do in the life of the community. "One hundred years of the parish is not an anniversary to be remembered from afar. They are a thank you to be pronounced today: for the Gospel

received, for the broken bread, the Eucharist and charity, for the people accompanied by God over a century." Referring to the Sunday Gospel, he invited the faithful not to be afraid to give their lives to Christ through daily service to their brothers and sisters. He recalled that hospitality, welcoming, and care for the smallest and most fragile are concrete expressions of the Franciscan charism and of a lived faith. Concluding his homily, Br. Massimo left the community with words that can become a programme for the years to come: "Do not be afraid of the charity you live. Here, the truth of the Gospel shines forth and takes flesh." At the end of the celebration, the Minister General blessed the new Family Counselling Centre, met with the team of psychologists and psychotherapists, and learned about the activities of this new work, which will be at the service of families and inhabitants of Olsztyn.

He then visited the spaces intended for social activities, recently renovated thanks to the support of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation. The renovated rooms now host educational, training, and charitable activities promoted by the friars together with the numerous communities that work at the friary. The visit coincided with the Zatorze Festival of Families, officially inaugurated by the Minister General. In an atmosphere of simplicity and authentic Franciscan joy, he met the parishioners, the neighbourhood's inhabitants, and the volunteers, also sharing moments of celebration with them and naturally participating in the dances. The day ended with the open-air show "The Jester of God", inspired by the life and spirituality of Francis of Assisi. The performance recalled how the message of the Poverello, the Poor Man of Assisi, remains relevant today and continues to inspire the construction of a world based on the Gospel, peace and fratern-



nity. The visit of the Minister General was one of the most significant moments of the centenary celebrations of the Franciscan presence in Zatorze. It was an occasion of fraternal communion, of renewed missionary zeal, and of encouragement to continue proclaiming the Gospel through prayer, fraternity, and service to every person, responding courageously to the challenges of our time.

Meeting of the Definitors of the Provinces of Germany and the Netherlands

's-Hertogenbosch (The Netherlands), 25th and 26th June 2026



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On the 25th and 26th June 2026, the Governing Boards of the Provinces of St. Elizabeth (Germany) and the Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands and Flanders) met in 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands) to discuss and confront the challenges related to the Franciscan presence in northwestern Europe and the future structure of cooperation between the Netherlands-Flanders and Germany.

On the 26th June, the Ministers and Definitors of the two Provinces were joined by the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General for the Transalpine Conference (COTAF), who participated in the talks. In his speech, the Minister General clarified the importance of distinguishing the Franciscan charism from its historically developed forms of expres-

sion, recalling how the era of large convents and large structures is now coming to an end, thus making it necessary to carry out a process of spiritual discernment in order to explore together which forms are appropriate today, and in the near future, to live the charism. In a trusting and constructive dialogue, the members of the two provincial governments, together with representatives of the General Government, examined the challenges and prospects of their respective provinces, agreeing on concrete steps towards a shared future. With this in mind, the Ministers and Definitors of the two Entities have traced a path composed of various stages of discernment and rapprochement between the two Provinces until 2028, the year of the Provincial Chapters of both Entities.



Chapters



Province of San Antonio de Padua holds its Intermediate Provincial Chapter *Minglanilla, Cebu, 22nd – 26th June 2026*



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From June 22 to 26, 2026, the friars of the Province of San Antonio de Padua – Philippines gathered at the Franciscan Retirement Community in Minglanilla, Cebu, for their Intermediate Provincial Chapter. Friars from the Visayas and Mindanao came together in prayer, discernment, fraternity, and decision-making, guided by the Chapter theme, “Let Us Begin Again: From Transitus to Transformation.”



The five-day Chapter began on June 22 with a solemn opening liturgy led by Br Arturo Daquilanea, OFM. Prof. Dennis Abarrientos presented a National Situationer on the current situation in the Philippines. Br Renee C. Dean, OFM, celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit, followed by a time of prayerful recollection led by Br Joel de Jesus, OFMCap, to encourage discernment.

On June 23, Br. Prisco Cajés, OFM, presided over the Eucharist, reflecting on his 40 years of faithful service. Discussions about the Province’s life and mission continued. On June 24, the friars celebrated Br. Jaime Raul Yakít, OFM’s, Golden Jubilee. Afternoon small-group discussions focused on the Province’s future and mission, ending with sports

activities and a Franciscan Crown devotion to Mary. On the fourth day, Br. Dante Barcelona, OFM, celebrated his Silver Jubilee with a Requiem Mass for departed friars, honoring their faithful service.

The final day featured Br. Neil Badillo, OFM, presiding over the Misa de Gracias, with a homily by Br. Noniel Pe, OFM, for his 40th priestly anniversary. The Chapter concluded with the approval of resolutions, closing days of prayer and dialogue. In the afternoon, the friars gathered at the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel for the election of the new Provincial Definitor. The Chapter elected Br. Raymond Osok, OFM, as First Definitor; Br. Mark Joy Basallajes, OFM, as Second Definitor; Br. Arturo Daquilanea, OFM, as Third Definitor; and Br. Daniel Borromeo, OFM, as Fourth Definitor.

The Provincial Chapter concluded in the evening with the Solemn Celebration of Vespers, honoring the Province’s jubilarians for their years of faithful service to God and the Church. The Minister Provincial formally concluded the Chapter, marking the end of this significant gathering of prayer, discernment, and fraternity.

Following the conclusion of the Chapter, the community celebrated Jubilarians’ Night—a joyful gathering that honored the jubilarians’ witness of fidelity, perseverance, and dedicated service to the fraternity and the Church.

Anchored on the theme “Let Us Begin Again: From Transitus to Transformation,” the Intermediate Provincial Chapter became a sacred moment of renewal for the Province. Through prayer, dialogue, discernment, and fraternity, the friars reaffirmed their commitment to the Franciscan vocation and embraced a renewed vision for the future of the Province of San Antonio de Padua – Philippines.

By Br. Kent Bryant M. Montes, OFM

Chapter of the Province of San Giacomo della Marca (Italy)

April and June 2026



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The Province of San Giacomo della Marca (Italy) outlined the guidelines for its future journey, bringing to completion the work of the 2026 Provincial Chapter, which took place at two different times.

The first assembly phase opened in Loreto at the “Terra dei Fioretti” House from the 13th to 17th April 2026. The session saw the installation of the reconfirmed Minister Provincial, Br. Simone

Giampieri, and the Vicar, Br. Luciano Genga, followed by the election of the four new Provincial Definitors: Br. Ferdinando Campana, Br. Lorenzo Del Bene, Br. Rudy Fraticelli, and Br. Andrea Ricatti. During those days, the capitulars analysed the *Instrumentum Laboris* in depth, focusing on the great challenges facing the community. The second session took place from 14th to 20th June 2026 at the “San Giuseppe” shelter in the

Republic of San Marino. At the centre of the work were the pillars of the Franciscan mission: from evangelisation (with missions to the people and ad gentes) to the care of youth, university and family ministry, up to collaboration in the various areas of the Province. The Chapter concluded with the approval of the Propositions and the final document, which will guide the Province’s actions for the coming years.



Chapters of Mats

Chapter of Mats in Ecuador

Azogues, 23rd – 25th June 2026



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From the 23rd to the 25th of June 2026, at the Shrine “Our Lady of the Cloud”, in the city of Azogues, Ecuador, the Province of St. Francis of Quito celebrated the Chapter of the Mats, within the framework of the VIII Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi. The meeting was convened by the Provincial Minister, Br. Ángel Montoya and

was attended by Br. César Külkamp, General Definitor for Latin America. 85 solemnly professed friars, 15 temporary professed, 3 novices and 6 postulants participated, who lived these days as a time of fraternal encounter, grateful memory and vocational renewal. The Chapter had as its theme: “Reviving our life and mission. Transition to the

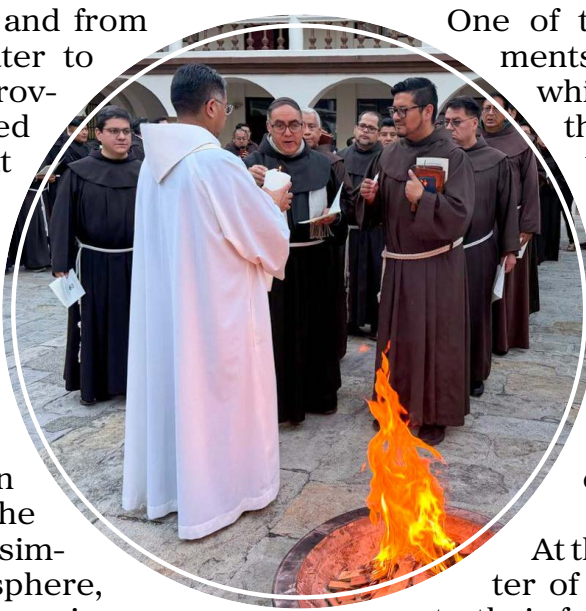


essential: to put off oneself in order to be re-born”, inspired by the Rule: “to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”. From this perspective, the friars accepted the call of the Minister General for the Province to start again with renewed hope, returning to the essentials of the Franciscan vocation and discerning together the ways to live the Gospel more faithfully in today’s Ecuador.

They were days of prayer, reflection, dialogue, and fraternal work. The reflection began with the life of St. Francis, from the letter of the Minister General to the Provincial Chapter of 2025 and from the Letter addressed later to all the brothers of the Province. These texts helped to look with serenity at the present and future of Franciscan life, seeking a more evangelical and coherent response to current challenges.

Ten months after the last Provincial Chapter, the joy of the reunion helped to strengthen the bonds of fraternity. In a simple and fraternal atmosphere, the friars shared their experience, listened to different voices, and reflected on the mission of the Friars Minor in a society that needs more fraternity, peace, and reconciliation.

The methodology of the meeting was marked by three attitudes: listening, discerning, and deciding. This journey began previously in each fraternity, where the brothers reflected on the two testaments of St. Francis, the bull “*Mira circa nos*” of Pope Gregory IX, the encyclical letter of Brother Elias and the document “*Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*”. Thus, the Chapter was not only a moment of a Provincial meeting, but also the expression of a process of community listening and a common search for God’s will.



One of the most significant moments was the skylight, during which the friars renewed their religious profession together. In this same spirit of renewal, each brother received a commemorative copy of the *Regula Bullata* and the Testament of the Seraphic Father St. Francis, as a sign of return to the sources of Franciscan life.

At the conclusion of the Chapter of Mats, the friars returned to their fraternities with a renewed desire to serve, to live the Holy Gospel more faithfully and to continue building a more fraternal, evangelical, and missionary Province, in the style of St. Francis of Assisi.



Animation of the Order

VI JPIC Asia-Oceania Continental

Meeting concluded

Jakarta, 22nd – 27th June 2026



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The VI Continental Meeting of Franciscan JPIC Animators of Asia and Oceania concluded in Jakarta, Indonesia. The aim of the meeting was to evaluate and to reflect on JPIC activities in the region under the theme “Caring for People, Caring for Creation”. Also, they shared on how JPIC Animators can implement the values of JPIC through explicit commitments in Asia as Franciscan witness.

From listening to the reports from both the South Asia and Oceania Conference (SAAOC) and the East Asia Conference (EAC), it can be concluded that each Entity has been working to make JPIC values present in the various ministries of the friars in Asia. These include eco-pastoral initiatives, advocacy for human dignity and the right to a healthy environment, different forms of dialogue, solidarity with victims of natural disasters and violence, and assistance to refugees and displaced persons. At the same time, many challenges continue to confront the friars, such as the extractive economy, armed conflict, forced migration, environmental degradation, human trafficking, and other related issues.



By examining the realities of Asia, the participants believe that these are not only signs of the times but also indications of an uncertain

future to which Franciscans are called to respond. For this reason, new approaches are needed to provide insight into how we can better understand these realities and respond effectively. A delegate from Franciscan International, Budi Tjahjono, offered practical guidance on defending the rights of Indigenous peoples, victims of conflict, and the right to a healthy environment at the grassroots, national, conference, and international levels. Br. Mikhael encouraged the friars to initiate various eco-pastoral projects, drawing from his many years of experience as a pioneer of eco-pastoral ministry in Indonesia. Hendro Sangkoyo also gave a comprehensive presentation on extractivism in South Asia and the impact of multinational corporations in the region.

The realities of Asia are a call for Franciscans to respond and collaborate. Returning to the Franciscan origins, spirituality and charism, Br. Derrick Yap led the participants in reflecting on formation and inspired them through Pope Leo’s new encyclical “*Magnifica Humanitas*” on human dignity and its implications for formation. Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado encouraged the participants to become Easter people as instruments of hope, especially as the Franciscan family celebrates the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi. Then, Br. Peter Beto shared his experience as a missionary in Myanmar, where he witnessed armed conflict, human rights violations, and extreme poverty. He reflected that, when confronted with such realities, people often feel hopeless and powerless. Although we know that peacebuilding, dialogue, and assistance to refugees are necessary, the challenge remains: what can we do as Franciscans?

Reflecting on Br. Agustinus Lorensius Nggame reminder at the beginning of the meeting that JPIC is not merely a program but a way of life, and on Br. Ignacio Ceja (the Vicar

general) emphasis that JPIC is a constitutive dimension of Gospel life through which the friars remain relevant and offer a prophetic alternative, the participants arrived at a common statement, resolutions, and commitments. Finally, the VI Continental Meeting concluded with a visit to the Ciliwung Community, where a statue of St. Francis was blessed, fish were released into the river, and trees were planted. Through the many messages shared by the young participants in the interfaith dialogue and the JPIC Animators of the Franciscan family in Jakarta, one mes-

sage stood out clearly: Franciscans should be at the forefront of caring for creation and caring for people, and they do believe that they do not stand alone. As one area of concern, the environmental crisis is being addressed not only by the JPIC Office of the OFM but also through interfaith dialogue among young people from different religious traditions in Indonesia, including Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians.

[Read the Final Statement](#)

Hope Flowed Down the Ciliwung: A Franciscan Easter in Jakarta

*“Interreligious Youth Dialogue for the Care of the Environment”:
a JPIC event in Indonesia*



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On June 27, 2026, the Ciliwung River flowed with a serenity that seemed to contradict the history written in its waters. It moved slowly through lush vegetation, as though the greenery itself were reluctant to leave that corner of Jakarta. No one would have imagined the decades of pollution, urbanization, and neglect the river had endured. Yet it had learned the most difficult of virtues: to continue giving life even after being wounded.

Starting at eight o'clock in the morning, the sky covered the riverbank with a blanket of clouds. A gentle breeze made the thirty-degree heat and tropical humidity bearable. Everything in that place was green, marked by Franciscan simplicity and restraint. Wherever the eye rested, creation seemed to move forward with quiet strength.

An hour later, nearly three hundred people had gathered on the riverside esplanade, which is also home to a small Muslim community. There were young Buddhists, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Confucians, and Catholics. No one had come to convince anyone else. Everyone had come to hear the cry of a land that could no longer bear to be called a “resource” when, in reality, it is our shared home.

During the opening ceremony, all the friars participating in the Asia–Oceania Continental JPIC Meeting were invited onto the stage. Each received a small bird that, after a brief countdown, was released simultaneously. The gesture symbolized freedom, fraternity, and the shared desire to care for creation as one human family. The simultaneous release of the birds perfectly captured the theme of the gath-

ering: “Interreligious Youth Dialogue for the Care of the Environment,” organized by the OFM JPIC Office of Indonesia as the closing event of the Sixth Asia–Oceania Continental JPIC Gathering. As the morning progressed, it was heartening to see young people from various religious traditions take the stage one after another. Each poetic, musical, or testimonial presentation reminded everyone that the Earth is not an object to be exploited, but a gift to be received and a responsibility entrusted to humanity.

It was not only a dialogue among religions; it was also a dialogue of hope that creation might once again unite a humanity all too accustomed to division. Through songs, moments of silence, and shared words, care for creation became a language capable of bringing together what had remained separated for centuries.

At noon, the participants made their way to the place where a statue of St. Francis had been erected on the riverbank in preparation for its blessing. There, a meaningful ecumenical prayer brought together representatives of different religious traditions in a shared act of gratitude and commitment to creation.

The blessing of the statue was led by Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado, OFM, Provincial Minister of the Province of San Pedro Bautista in the Philippines and President of the East Asia Conference (EAC). The trees to be planted as signs of hope and ecological restoration were also blessed. Likewise, the fish that would later be released into the river received the blessing. Following the prayer before the image of St. Francis, the participants planted trees as signs of hope and the restoration of nature. Afterwards, lunch brought together people of different religions and Christian traditions around the same table. Without changing seats, the tables became spaces for dialogue. In an atmosphere of respect and mutual listening, participants shared experiences and reflected on the challenges of integral ecology, discovering that care for creation is one of the most powerful common languages for interreligious encounter and collaboration.

Once the group work had concluded, the participants boarded small boats and travelled along a stretch of the river. The boat ride allowed them to witness firsthand the reality of

the Ciliwung. Its waters are still marked by pollution and the waste accumulated over many years, but also by the many community initiatives working tirelessly to restore the river to life. Along the way, participants witnessed various clean-up efforts, particularly those focused on removing plastics and other debris that continue to threaten the ecosystem.

Midway through the journey, a symbolic gesture took place: the release of the fish that had been blessed earlier in the day. The bags were gently opened, and hundreds of small fish returned to the river as a sign of hope and a commitment to restoring life where deterioration had prevailed for so long. Upon returning to the meeting point, the working groups presented their conclusions. Between presentations, Franciscan sisters involved in JPIC ministry performed songs accompanied by graceful choreography. For a few moments, dialogue gave way to beauty.

After several hours beneath overcast skies, the clouds finally parted, and the afternoon light illuminated the lush green vegetation, revealing a landscape of unexpected colours. Nature seemed to respond with its own harmony to the gestures of care and hope sown throughout the day. Before the gathering concluded, all the participants assembled for the official group photograph—a keepsake preserving the memory of an event in which people of different religions walked together in support of the care of creation. Shortly afterwards, a traditional dance brought the gathering to a joyful close. Through it, the host community once again expressed the richness of its culture and the warmth of its hospitality. As the Ciliwung continued its journey toward the heart of Jakarta, hope continued to flow within all who had shared that day. The newly planted trees, the fish returned to the river, and the dialogue among people of different religions all served as reminders that life always finds a way to be renewed, even where it once seemed diminished.

Perhaps the true Franciscan Easter experienced in Jakarta was the realization that caring for creation is itself a proclamation of hope: that, in the light of faith, life can always find a way through the world’s wounds.

Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM

JPIC General Office Director

Letter to the Formators in the Novitiate


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We publish the sixth Letter on Formation and Studies, this time addressed to Formators in the Novitiate. 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:

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News from the Entities



Assembly of the FCAO in Indonesia

Conferences of Asia and Oceania – Bogor, 29 June–3 July 2026


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From 29 June to 3 July 2026, the Assembly of the Franciscan Conference of Asia and Oceania (FCAO) was held in Bogor, Indonesia. It brought together the Ministers Provincial, Custodes, Presidents of Foundations, Conference Secretaries and delegates of the East Asia Conference (EAC) and the South Asia, Australia and Oceania Conference (SAAOC). It was a privileged moment of prayer, dialogue and discernment, during which local Franciscan leaders reflected on the life of their Entities and identified common priorities for the mission of the Order on the two continents.

The Assembly began with the celebration of the Eucharist for the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, presided over by Br John Wong, Definitory General for the Conferences of Asia and Oceania. In his homily, reflecting on the witness of the two Apostles, he reminded the participants that authentic Franciscan leadership is rooted in a living relationship with Christ and is expressed through courageous missionary witness, giving priority to the poor and to the care of creation.

Br Agustinus Nggame, Minister of the Province of Saint Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, then welcomed the delegates on behalf of the host Province, while the Vicar General, Br Ignacio Ceja, conveyed the greetings of the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli. Br Ignacio recalled the importance of fra-

ternity and reminded the Assembly that “the first fruit of our meetings is to meet one another, to share life and to share experiences,” encouraging the participants to make these days an authentic time of listening, dialogue and renewed communion.

Br Derrick Yap, President of the SAAOC and Custos of the Custody of St. Anthony (Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei), presented the objectives of the meeting: not only to examine the life and mission of the various Entities, but also to identify common priorities and formulate resolutions to strengthen collaboration throughout the FCAO.

The reports from the Provinces, Custodies and Foundations highlighted both the vitality and the challenges of the Franciscan presence in Asia and Oceania. The participants shared developments in the areas of vocations, formation, education, parish ministry, missionary activity, communications and JPIC, while also identifying new opportunities for collaboration through shared formation programmes, missionary cooperation and the sharing of friars and resources.

Regarding the implementation of the FCAO 2024 resolutions, Br Angelito Andig Cortez, Secretary of the EAC, presented an update on the development of a unified website and Facebook page for the FCAO. The initiative



aims to strengthen communication, facilitate the sharing of information and promote greater collaboration among all the Entities of the Conference.

Br Dennis Tayo, General Animator of the Missions, shared the missionary priorities of the Order, while Br Gerald Terence Saimel, presented “Tutela Asia” the regional Safeguarding network dedicated to promoting a culture of care, responsibility and safe environments in all Franciscan ministries.

Br Taucen Girsang, Vice-Director of the General Office of JPIC, presented the [Jakarta Statement 2026](#) and the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia, encouraging closer collaboration in promoting justice, peace, human dignity and the care of creation throughout the region. Br Judee Mar Maquinad, Secretary for Formation and Studies of the EAC, underlined the importance of strengthening Franciscan formation through on-going formation, intercultural fraternity, leadership development and the exchange of formators. In the following days, the Assembly focused on preparations for the General Chapter 2027 and received an update on World Youth Day, which will take place in Seoul, South Korea, also in 2027. Br Lino Gregorio Redoblado, during the Eucharistic celebration over which he presided, recalled that “when Christ is in the boat, the storm never has the last word,” inviting all to face the challenges of our time with faith, hope and evangelical commitment.

The participants also had the opportunity to experience the Franciscan presence in Indonesia first-hand: they visited St. Peter’s Parish in Cianjur, the Poor Clare Monastery, Our Lady of the Angels Parish in Cipanas and St. Joseph’s Orphanage. There, on the occasion of the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis, Br John Wong, blessed a new statue of the Poor Man of Assisi and a memorial garden.

The Assembly concluded in a spirit of gratitude, fraternity and renewed commitment to the Franciscan mission. The final day began with the Eucharist presided over by Br Derrick Yap, OFM, who, inspired by St. Thomas the Apostle, invited the friars to move from doubt to courageous witness, remaining rooted as a “contemplative fraternity in mission.” The delegates also celebrated significant moments of Franciscan life, including the 60th birthday of Br John Wong, OFM, together with other birthdays and anniversaries of religious profession.

The FCAO expressed deep gratitude to Br John Wong, Br Lino Gregorio Redoblado, Br Derrick Yap, and to the SAAOC as the host Conference, to Br Agustinus Nggame, and the Province of Indonesia, to the community of Casa Monte Rosa Ciloto, and to the secretariat and communications teams for their valuable service. The friars now return to their fraternities strengthened in communion and called to continue proclaiming the Gospel with hope, peace and joy.

Assembly of the Secretaries of Mission and Evangelization of the CEM

Southern European Conference, June 26-29, 2026



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From June 26 to 29, 2026, the Assembly of the Mission and Evangelization Secretaries of the Conference of Southern Europe (CEM) took place in Taranto (Italy), at the convent of San Pasquale Baylon. The meeting was an important opportunity for discussion, formation, and discernment on the future of the evangelizing mission in the context of Europe and the Mediterranean, in a time marked by secularization, new poverty and the widespread search for hope. A privileged way to renew missionary action has been identified in the collaboration between the OFM Provinces and in the sharing of experiences.

A particularly significant moment was dedicated to *Oikos Mediterraneo*, the Franciscan project for the integral ecology of the Mediterranean, officially born in the convent of Taranto in 2023 and in collaboration with the Pontifical University *Antonianum*. *Oikos* consists of concrete paths of research, training, territorial care, social promotion and interreligious dialogue, and involves young people, researchers, teachers, friars and the Poor Clares. Thanks to the interventions of Br. Francesco Zecca, president of *Oikos Mediterraneo*, Paolo

Cancelli, vice president and head of the PUA Development Office, Pierpasquale Antonante, environmental engineer engaged in the *Oikos* routes, and Br. Gabriele Graniello, of the *Oikos* Board of Directors, the participants delved into the value of integral ecology as a paradigm of evangelization, following the models of *Oikos* at the service of new pastoral paths.

Ample space has also been dedicated to the laboratories, animated by Br. Nicola Violante, Minister Delegate of the CEM Council and Provincial Minister of the Province of S. Michele Arcangelo, and from Br. Matteo Brena, Secretary of Mission and Evangelization of the Conference.

The discussion concerned the process of reorganization of the provincial Secretariats and the Conference, deepening their role of coordination, pastoral animation and support for provincial governments in promoting the Life and Mission Project of each Entity. The Assembly also deepened the new *Ratio Evangelizationis* of the Order, wondering how it can be transposed and implemented in the different Entities of the Conference. The reflection focused on the opportunities offered by the document to integrate more effectively the missionary dimension into the projects of life and evangelization of the fraternities.

At the end of the work, the participants expressed the desire to continue the common path, identifying design lines capable of supporting the growth of the new Conference and offering evangelical responses to the challenges of the Mediterranean. In a context marked by fragmentation, conflicts and loss of hope, the Assembly renews its commitment to live the mission as an announcement of the Gospel, testimony of fraternity and service to the dignity of every person, in the awareness that evangelization takes shape first of all through processes of listening, communion and care of the common home.

With the contribution of the Assembly of Secretaries of Missions and Evangelization of the CEM



Visit to the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Sudan and South Sudan

In the cities of Juba and Wau, the Franciscan presence continues to grow



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From the 17th to the 27th June 2026, Br. Siphelele Gwanisheni, Definitor General for African Conferences, Br. Baptist D'Souza, Delegate of the Secretary General for relations with the OFM Fraternitas Foundation, and Br. Gil Noriega of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation visited the friars of the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Sudan and South Sudan. Ten days to get to know the life of the friars on mission and the activities promoted in the pastoral and social inclusion fields in favour of the population.

Br. Siphelele presided, together with Br. Federico Gandolfi, President of the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation, the Assembly held in Juba from the 24th to 26th June, which saw the participation of all the missionaries.

Br. Baptist and Br. Gil, led by Br. Federico, visited the Franciscan presences and the projects underway in the cities of Wau and Juba.

In Wau, about 650 km northwest of the capital Juba, Br. Baptist and Br. Gil visited, in

the heart of the forest, a convent for friars under construction and a small building adjacent to the friary, which, once completed, will be used for parish activities.

The St. Francis of Assisi Foundation is also repairing wells for drinking water, thanks to private donations and the support of the OFM Fraternitas Foundation.

Brother Gill and Brother Baptist then went to the leper colony, where the young people in vocational reception carry out a voluntary service of assistance to the sick, preparing meals for them.

From Wau they then moved to Juba, where they visited the Parish of the Holy Trinity, previously built with mud and today, totally rebuilt.

They then reached the five villages where the friars serve, up to 75 km away from the parish: welcomed with joy by the population, they went to the camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, where children go to school during the week, whilst on

Sundays, the same tent built with walls of reeds, hosts Sunday mass.

The St. Francis of Assisi Foundation has also created a free educational sports course for girls and boys between 7 and 20 years old: this is how "Food for Camp" was born, a 3-week camp active during the school holidays, where young people can play sports, receive two meals a day for free and have the opportunity to get in touch with peers from different local tribes. It is not only the beneficiaries who benefit from the Food for Camp programme: the instructors who train the students are university students who, thanks to the salaries they also receive, are able to pay their annual university fees.

Another project that Br. Baptist and Br. Gil was able to view its PGP (Peace and Good People), where young local volunteers provide basic medical care and basic necessities to peers living on the streets.

At the end of the visit, the friars were able to attend the renewal of the vows of six temporarily professed South Sudanese, a concrete testimony of the growth of the Franciscan vocation in the country.

Br. Siphelele, Br. Baptist, and Br. Gil thus returned to Rome grateful for the welcome received and with the commitment to continue to support, through the OFM Fraternitas Foundation, the projects and life of the mission.

LIFE in the Order



Solemn professions

6th July, Prov. St. Pedro Bautista (Filippine): **Br. Mark Jude Del Rosario**

13th June, Prov. St. Thomas the Apostle (India): **Br. Gins Francis (Joseph)**

Azheecal, Br. Kishor Joseph (Joseph) Panachickaparayil, Br. Maria Nithin Xavier Xavier.

8th May, Custody of St. Mary Mother of God (India): **Br. Ravitkumar Tirkey Tirkey**



Priestly Ordinations

1st July, Prov. The Twelve Apostles (Peru)
Br. David Alberca Bermeo, Br. Eduardo (Eduardo Antonio) Quevedo Delgado

1st July, Prov. St Saviour (Slovakia)
Br. Lukáš Mária (Vincent) Buhla

1st July, St. Juniper Serra (Mexico)
Br. Luis Roberto Cisneros Reveles, Br. Eduardo Javier González Quezada

1st July, The Custody of the Holy Land
Br. Mervyn Gladstone Gomez, Br. Matthias (Matthias-Ladislaus) Tarsoly

1st July, Prov. Sts Francis and James (Mexico)
Br. Germán González González, Br. Mario Hernández Negrete

1st July, Prov. Our Lady of the Angels (DRC)
Br. Alphonse Katende Kwete, Br. Freddy Safari Muhigirwa

1st July, Seraphic Province of St. Francis (Italy)
Br. Simone Lunedei, Br. Francesco Maria (Francesco) Sorice

1st July, Custody of St. Jerome (Croatia)
Br. Antonio Gospić

St 1 July, Prov. Saints Cyril and Methodius (Croatia)
Br. Andrej Jozić



Deceased Brothers

† 29th June: Br. Claudio Alberto Pumarino Guzmán, Prov. The Most Holy Trinity (Chile)

† 27th June: Br. Otto (Josef) Unterasinger, Prov. St. Leopold (Austria-Italy)

† 24th June: Br. Agostino (Mario Felice) Campanozzi, Prov. St. Michael the Archangel (Italy)

† 21st June: Br. Lawrence (Soojong) Park, prov. The Martyrs of Korea (South Korea)

† 7th April: Br. Anésio (Rafael) Gomes da Silva, St. Anthony of Padua (Brazil)

Information received from the General Secretariat

Support and closeness to our brothers in Venezuela

A fundraising campaign has been launched to support the friars and earthquake victims



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The terrible earthquake that struck Venezuela on June 24 also affected the Friars Minor of the Franciscan Custody of the Immaculate Conception. The Custos, Br. Antonio Reyes, announced that there were no injuries or casualties among the friars, but that extensive material damage was reported to Franciscan structures, as was dramatically the case in the areas of the country hit by the earthquake.

“I have been in communication with all the brothers and, thank God, they are well, without having suffered any personal physical harm,” Br. Antonio communicated to the Order’s Government, which promptly contacted the brothers of the Custody to express their closeness and understand the gravity of the situation. The convent and church of Christ the King in Caracas suffered damage, but now the priority is to help the survivors and the injured. The



friars are tirelessly working to help those affected by the earthquake: “As time passes, we are realizing the magnitude of the situation,” the Custos continued. “We were not prepared for this, in every sense. Rescue operations are very precarious and even rudimentary due to the lack of adequate equipment and qualified personnel. Many are helping with their bare hands, using cell phones to light their way. The aftershocks were very close and strong, and they are still being felt. But in this difficult situation, we continue to trust in God, and, placed in His hands, we continue to walk in Hope.”

The Order of Friars Minor expresses its closeness to the brothers in Venezuela and supports the fundraising campaign that the *Fondazione OFM Fraternitas* has launched for the earthquake victims: [click here to join](#).

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Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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