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VI UNDER TEN CHAPTER OF MATS



ASSISI 2026



INDEX

The History of the International Chapters of Mats Under Ten 3

The Under Ten Chapter opens at the Porziuncola 4

Vocation in the light of fraternity 6

A day marked by the service of authority, evangelization, and Franciscan memory 8

From prayer to fraternal care at the Under Ten Chapter 10

Round table discussion on the digital world, artificial intelligence, and care for our common home..... 12

The Under Ten Chapter concludes in Assisi with a call to begin again from fraternity 14

Final Message of the VI Under Ten Chapter of Mats OFM 17



EDITORIAL

Dear Brothers,

This special edition of *Fraternitas* gathers together the memories of the VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten OFM, celebrated in Assisi in July 2026, in the heart of the eighth centenary of the Easter of St. Francis. The experiences of those days reminded us that the Franciscan vocation remains alive when it returns to the Gospel and finds its concrete form of life in fraternity.

The participating friars brought with them the joys, struggles, questions, and hopes of their Entities. They reflected on prayer, the service of authority, the integral care of the person, mental health, the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, evangelisation, the digital world, artificial intelligence, and care for our common home. Amidst these diverse themes, a common calling emerged: to protect humanity, to serve the Gospel with sobriety, and to build truer, freer, and more evangelical relationships. The Chapter also demonstrated the Order’s international, youthful, and diverse face. Different languages, cultures, and sensibilities met not as obstacles, but as gifts.

This edition of *Fraternitas*, therefore, seeks to be more than a chronicle of events: it seeks to preserve a memory that helps us continue our journey and discernment. Because what happened in Assisi belongs not only to the Under Ten friars: their questions, insights, and hopes question the life and mission of the entire Order.

The participants’ final message expressed, with realism and hope, that the renewal of our lives is also built through daily choices that make the Gospel visible in our fraternities. The invitation to return to the sources without nostalgia, to experience a simpler and more authentic fraternity, resounded forcefully; A fraternity that is a home for every brother and a safe space where even their frailties, weariness, and wounds can be welcomed.

Similarly, the Chapter recalled that our mission requires a humble and close presence. Evangelising in a minority means listening, accompanying, and walking with the People of God. The new spaces of digital culture, the development of artificial intelligence, and the care of our common home also demand responsible discernment and a Franciscan presence that always places the person, fraternity, and the Gospel at the centre. We wish you happy reading and hope that these pages, images, and videos will allow you to relive something of what was shared in Assisi and extend its fruits into the life of your fraternities.

Br. Byron A. Chamann Anléu, OFM
Director



The History of the International Chapters of Mats Under Ten

From 1995 to Today


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The International Under Ten Chapter of Mats is a meeting convened by the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor to bring together friars from around the world who have fewer than ten years of solemn profession. Inspired by the Chapter of Mats experienced by St. Francis and his friars at the origins of the Order, this gathering offers young friars a privileged space for fraternity, prayer, reflection, and sharing about their vocation and mission. At each edition, delegates from the different Conferences and Entities of the Order meet with the Minister General and the General Definitory to share the joys and challenges of Franciscan life, identify paths of renewal, and formulate proposals for the governance of the Order.

This Chapter bears witness to the vitality and universality of the Franciscan charism, which continues to be renewed in new generations of friars.

Prior to this year, the Order had held five Chapters of Mats Under Ten:

COMPOSTELA

St James of Compostela (Spain)
September 1995



Canindé (Brazil)
July 2001



The Holy Land
July 2007



Guadalajara and Mexico City (Mexico)
June 2012



Taizé (France)
July 2019



The Under Ten Chapter opens at the Porziuncola

Young friars from around the world gathered in Assisi in the sign of fraternity



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On 5 July 2026, in the place where St. Francis welcomed the first brothers and where he wished to conclude his earthly journey, the VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten of the Order of Friars Minor was inaugurated. 135 friars with less than ten years of Solemn Profession, coming from the five continents, gathered at the Porziuncola, together with the friars of the General Government, to live a time of listening, discernment and international fraternity. The opening day was centered on the living memory of the Franciscan origins. After the first moments of welcome, the program included the introduction, the words of welcome, the Franciscan prayer and the procession from Domus Pacis to the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels. The friars carried the flags of their countries of origin, making visible the variety of peoples, languages and cultures that today make up the Order. In the opening greeting, Br Ignacio Ceja, OFM, Vicar General, welcomed the participants, recalling that this Chapter is not simply an event in the calendar of the Order, but a laboratory proving ground of fraternity. He invited the friars to live these days with grati-

tude for the vocation received and for the gift of the brothers, according to the expression of St. Francis: "The Lord gave me brothers". In an international context, he encouraged each one not to remain closed within their own language group or Conference, but to open themselves to meeting brothers from other countries, even when communication requires creativity, simple gestures, smiles and patient listening.

The opening Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Br Ignacio Ceja, OFM, who in his homily recalled that the Porziuncola is not only a place of memory, but a source to which the friars are called to return in order to rediscover the meaning of their life and mission. It was precisely here that Francis understood his vocation more deeply, welcomed the first brothers and sought with them how to better serve the Lord. Commenting on Jesus' invitation, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest", Br Ignacio spoke of the real burdens that young friars carry in their hearts: the desire for fidelity, the challenges of mission, fraternal life, pastoral responsibilities, cultural

transformations, wars and the many forms of material and spiritual poverty. Before being evangelizers, he recalled, the friars are disciples; before being responsible for something, they are brothers called by Someone. The Porziuncola was presented as the sanctuary of the little ones. Minority, the heart of the Franciscan charism, is not weakness but freedom: the awareness that everything is grace and that the Kingdom grows through those who know how to entrust themselves to God with simplicity. In a world marked by competition, polarization, violence and wars, the Franciscan charism remains extraordinarily relevant. For this reason, Br Ignacio emphasized, the world needs men and women capable of proclaiming peace not only with words, but through their way of living.

In the afternoon, after returning from the fraternal visit to the brothers in Ukraine, Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, addressed the participants with the introduction to the VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten, placing the meeting at the heart of the Franciscan Centenary 1226-2026. The Minister General greeted the friars, recalling that they come from every corner of the Order, bringing stories of flourishing Entities and weary Entities, experiences of mission, hopes and also wounds. At the Porziuncola, however, distances are gathered together and all return to being simply Friars Minor around the small church which represents the birth of our Order. Br Massimo recalled the meaning of the name Chapter of Mats. It is not a matter of nostalgia for the past, but of a memory that guides the present. The mats evoke the first friars gathered around the Porziuncola, poor and without complex organization, with the Gospel at the center and the bond of fraternity. To choose this name today means to desire an Order that once again listens to the Gospel in order to proclaim it with one's life and words. The Minister General then read the experience of the Under Ten friars in the light of the Testament of St. Francis. The first ten years after Solemn Profession are a delicate stage, in which the idealism of initial formation meets the realism of daily life. Disillusionment, loneliness, weariness in relationships and in structures can arise. Nevertheless, he observed, in the questions of the young friars one does not first find complaints, but a search for authenticity: the desire for authority lived as service, for real dialogue between generations, for sincere accompaniment of fragilities, for an evangelical presence on the digital

continent and in the peripheries of the world. In his address, Br Massimo indicated three inheritances of St. Francis as the horizon of the journey: mercy towards the poor and love for Christ crucified; the Church and the Eucharist as poor but fruitful ground; fraternity without power as a source of peace. These inheritances are not themes to be discussed and filed away, but seeds that must bear fruit in the concrete life of the friars and of the Order.

The Chapter, the Minister General emphasized, is not a course, but a participatory and synodal experience. The friars are not passive recipients of formation, but protagonists called to offer their word, their listening and their discernment. What matures in Assisi will also be oriented towards the General Chapter of Pentecost 2027, which will be celebrated in Vietnam, so that the voice of the new generations may contribute to the journey of the whole Order.

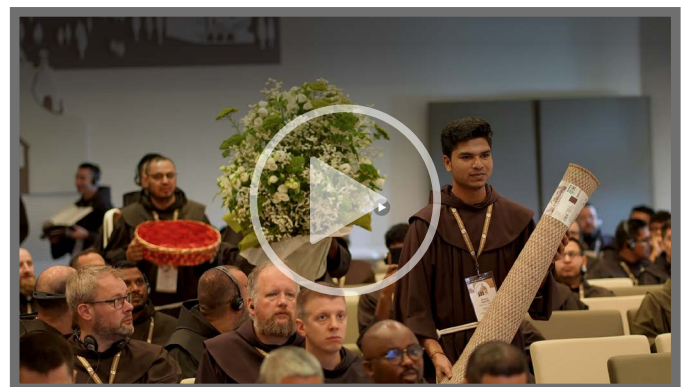
The first day concluded with group work, the personal sharing of each one's vocational story and the intercultural evening, concrete signs of a fraternity that is not born from abstract ideas, but from the encounter between faces, languages, memories and hopes. At the Porziuncola, in the place of the origins, the Under Ten Chapter thus began its journey: not with the claim of possessing all the answers, but with the desire to listen together to what the Spirit is saying today to the Franciscan generation called to make the seed of St. Francis germinate anew.

Read the homily of Br Ignacio Ceja:

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

Read the address of the Minister General:

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





#UNDERTENOFM

Vocation in the light of fraternity

The Under Ten friars in the places of Saint Francis



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Monday, July 6, during the Under Ten OFM Chapter of Mats, the friars were led along an itinerary of listening, discernment, and living remembrance in the Franciscan places. After the prayer of Lauds and the *lectio divina* on the theme “You are all brothers. Franciscan identity”, the participants entered into a time of personal reflection, of dialogue about the difficulties, hopes, and challenges faced by the Under Ten friars in light of the 2026 survey and the syntheses of the pre-chapters, and of spiritual conversation in groups aimed at understanding one’s vocation in the light of fraternity.

The morning reflection, entrusted to Fr. Giuseppe Buffon, placed once again at the center, the heart of Franciscan identity, starting from the Gospel words: “You are all brothers.” The speaker recalled that, for Francis, fraternity is not simply a community ideal, but the concrete form of evangelical life: a path without careerism, without claims to superiority, always open to learning and conversion. Minority, he stressed, is not a static idea, but a relationship to be lived each day.

Fr. Buffon further pointed to fraternity as a force capable of crossing history and speaking to today’s challenges as well. To be Friars Minor means to be with others, not only to do something for others; it means to safeguard relationships that are true, close, and mutual, because fraternity is not an abstract idea but a concrete mediation of humanity and of the Gospel. Afterwards, the group continued with reflections in groups. In the afternoon, the friars set out toward various Franciscan places: the Porziuncola, San Damiano, and the Hermitage of the Carceri. Each linguistic group followed its own itinerary, with reflections, dialogue, a guided visit, personal prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist, and Vespers. In this pilgrimage, the places were not merely a memory of the past, but spaces of listening in order to recognize today the shape of Franciscan vocation today.

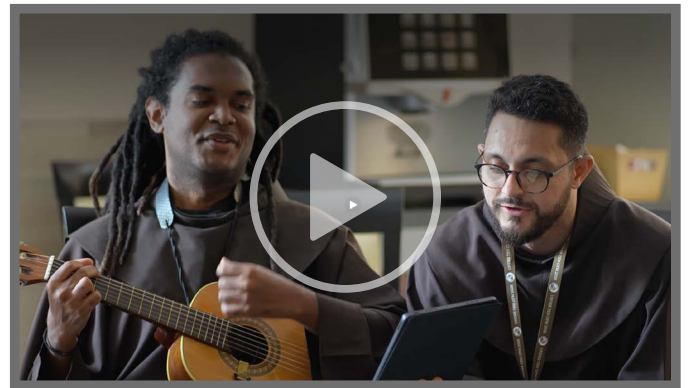
The English-language group visited the Porziuncola on the theme “The Paschal Mystery of Saint Francis of Assisi.” In the place that safeguards the origin of the fraternity, the medi-

tation invited them to understand and deepen together Francis's birth and transitus: the Porziuncola is both the cradle of the Order and the place of Francis's passage from life to death. Here Francis was born spiritually; here he welcomed his evangelical vocation; and here, on the night of October 3, 1226, he entrusted his life to the Lord.

The reflection, guided by the Minister General, Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, highlighted the logic of gift. Like Jesus, who "loved his own to the end", Francis too, as he drew near to death, did not close in on himself in fear, but shared bread with the brothers. His passing is not the end of a story, but the fulfillment of a life given as gift. "Take courage, brothers: for me it will be the harbor of life", Francis would say to his friars. From this, springs a word of hope for the young friars: the last word is not death; the last word is gift.

At the Porziuncola, the friars were also able to contemplate the Marian face of our vocation: Saint Mary of the Angels becomes the model of a life that receives in order to give, that welcomes the Word and lets it become flesh in history. In the context of the Franciscan Jubilee of 2026, this place presents itself once again as a space of forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewal, where each person can rediscover the center of their call. The dialogue following the meditation addressed some concrete challenges of the Order: the decline of vocations, the need for stronger interprovincial collaboration, the possibility of new

international fraternities, the urgent need to develop deeper formation on the Franciscan identity of lay brothers, and the risk of a clerical mentality that impoverishes our vocation call to fraternity. Amid these questions, the testimony of Fr. Joaquin Echeverry, with fifty years of religious life, resounded; with simplicity he recalled: "We are all brothers; there is no distinction."



The day concluded with dinner together with the fraternity of Saint Mary of the Angels and a time of recreation. After an intense day, marked by the Word, the memory of the places, and fraternal dialogue, the Under Ten friars carried with them a renewed conviction: Franciscan identity is not safeguarded by repeating formulas, but by living evangelical relationships. From Assisi, fraternity continues to speak as promise and task, so that the world may recognize in the Friars Minor men called to be brothers to all.





A day marked by the service of authority, evangelization, and Franciscan memory

From San Damiano, a perspective on gratuity, goods, and fraternal life



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On Tuesday, 7 July, the brothers taking part in the VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten OFM continued their journey in Assisi with a day shaped by prayer, reflection, and direct contact with the places that safeguard the living memory of Saint Francis. The morning began with Lauds and lectio divina on “The service of authority in Franciscan life”, led by Fr. Jakub František Sadílek, OFM. Drawing from lived experience, he invited the brothers to understand authority not as dominion, but as a service that accompanies, listens, and sustains the life of the brothers. In his meditation he offered a few simple and profound images: the friar called to be father, mother, and brother; authority that first learns to be a son; a motherhood made of welcome and prayer; and the service of the Good Shepherd, who helps each brother to discover and live their own path within a fraternal community. After a time of personal meditation, the reflection continued with Fr. Sergio Massironi, who developed the theme of today’s areopagi of evangelization. Beginning with the biblical cities of Antioch and Athens,

he noted that evangelization cannot be reduced to a strategy or a presence in places of power, but is born wherever the Gospel generates new relationships, capable of bringing together people who otherwise would remain apart. He recalled that Christian joy is not an ornament of proclamation, but one of its deepest signs, and that the little ones, the poor, and the excluded are the privileged recipients of a revelation that transforms life from within.



The morning concluded with spiritual conversation in groups. The brothers were invited to ask themselves to what conversion the Lord is calling them, so as to exercise an authority able to animate fraternity and to respond with creativity, hope, and courage to the challenges of our time. It was a time of listening and discernment, in continuity with the synodal method accompanying these days of Chapter.

In the afternoon, the participants went to various Franciscan places. The Italian-speaking group visited San Damiano. The meeting began with a reflection by Fr. Martín Carbajo, OFM, dedicated to gratuity, fraternity, and the economy, drawing from the experience of Saint Francis. In the place where the Lord spoke to the heart of the Poverello with the invitation, “Go and repair my house”, Fr. Martín recalled that Francis progressively discovered God’s gratuity through a path marked also by searching, mistakes, and fragility. The encounter with the leper was presented as a decisive experience of reciprocity: Francis not only drew near to the leper, but was also welcomed by the leper, thus discovering a new way of relating. The reflection emphasized that, in the Franciscan tradition, a person’s greatness is not measured by power or efficiency, but by fraternity. From this perspective, goods are called to circulate as gift, and the economy finds its meaning when it serves relationship, the dignity of each person, and the building of community. Work, poverty, and the use of money were also read in the light of an evangelical freedom that does not break bonds, but purifies them and orients them toward the common good.



After the reflection, a friar from the local fraternity offered an introduction to the sanctuary of San Damiano, helping the brothers to enter into the history and the spiritual meaning of the place: there, the place where Francis heard the call to repair the Church, and where Clare lived with her sisters a radical form of following the Lord and living the Gospel.



#UNDERTENOFM



From prayer to fraternal care at the Under Ten Chapter

*At the Carceri, a call to unite contemplation and mission,
from the mountain to the valley*



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On Wednesday July 8, the brothers taking part in the 6th Chapter of Mats Under Ten OFM experienced a day in Assisi dedicated to prayer and to integral care of the person, continuing their pilgrimage to the Franciscan places. The day began with Lauds and continued with lectio divina on “The spirit of prayer and devotion”, led by Sister Therèse Myriam, abbess of the Coletine Poor Clares of Assisi. Drawing on the contemplative experience of Clare and her sisters, the reflection helped them recognize that prayer is not a time set apart from life, but the inner fire that sustains work, relationships and daily fidelity. Sister Therèse Myriam recalled the concern of Saint Clare and Saint Francis not to extinguish “the spirit of holy prayer and devotion”. Prayer and work, she emphasized, are not opposed to one another; rather, they shed light on each other and nourish each other. On this path, true conversion begins with self-knowledge but does not end with oneself: it opens to humility, poverty, silence, remembrance of Christ’s Passion and perseverance in love. Devotion was

presented as the offering of the whole person to God, kindled by the Spirit and purified through contact with the wounds of Christ. The morning continued with the contribution of Prof. Giuseppe Crea, Comboni missionary, psychologist and psychotherapist, on mental and emotional health. His reflection invited the friars to look at the diversity of personalities not as a threat, but as a richness that needs to be recognized, harmonized and placed at the service of fraternity. Each person carries gifts and limits; when a trait becomes rigid, it can turn into a difficulty, but when it is accepted freely and accompanied by the community, it can become a path of vocational growth.

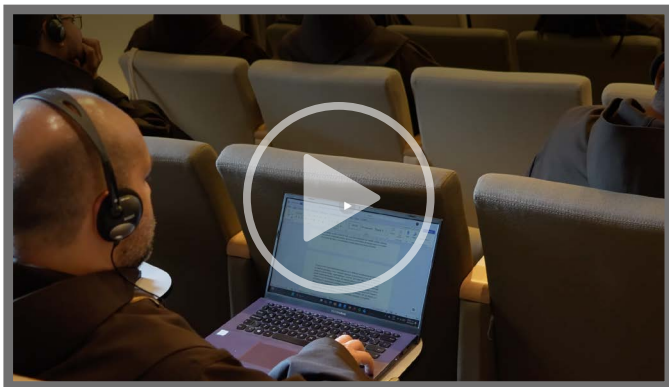
Prof. Crea also stressed the value of relationships as a place of human and spiritual maturation. No one is saved alone, and fraternal life asks for the patient passage from “I” to “you”, from one’s own things to common things, so as to walk toward the things of Christ. In this horizon, fraternal correction, listening and the abili-

ty to ask for help are not signs of weakness, but concrete expressions of a fraternity that cares. Emotions too were presented as important signals: they regulate action, provide affective energy and help one recognize one's limits. The round table in the second part of the morning deepened these themes from the perspective of self-care, mental health and safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults within the Order. Moderated by Fr. Albert Schmucki, OFM, President of the International Commission for Safeguarding of the OFM, it brought together Sister Thérèse Myriam, Prof. Giuseppe Crea and Fr. Eduard Iurii Semko, OFM, Director of the Office for the Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults of the OFM. The participants' questions revealed real tensions in Franciscan life: the distance between the ideal and everyday reality, the difficulty of integrating mission and community, the burden of loneliness, the impact of digital media and the need for safe spaces to share one's fragility. Safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults was presented not only as a response to a problem, but as a demand of the Gospel and of Franciscan identity. Fr. Eduard Iurii Semko recalled that self-care is also a first form of safeguarding: a brother who allows the Gospel to convert them learns to build freer, more transparent and healthier relationships. Where fragilities are not acknowledged, compensations, abuses of power or subtle forms of spiritual abuse can arise; therefore, a fraternity capable of preventing isolation, fostering dialogue and accompanying those who are weary becomes a true school of care. In the afternoon, the participants made the final pilgrimage to the three Franciscan places: the Porziuncola, San Damiano and the Carceri. The Spanish-language group climbed to the sanctuary of the Carceri, a place of silence, retreat and living memory of Saint Francis' inner journey. There Fr. Carlos Salto, OFM, offered the reflection "Franciscan

alternation: from the mountain to the valley", helping the brothers contemplate an essential dimension of the life of a friar minor: to go up the mountain to be with the Lord and to go down to the valley to meet the brothers, the poor and the wounds of the world. At the Carceri, the experience of silence was not presented as an escape,



but as a return to the source. The mountain recalls the need to stop, listen, allow oneself to be looked upon by God and to set one's heart in order; the valley recalls that true prayer always leads back to mission, fraternity and service. Franciscan alternation does not separate contemplation and action; it keeps them in fruitful dialogue. Without times of prayer, mission risks being emptied; without descending into concrete life, contemplation can close in on itself. Fr. Carlos Salto's reflection allowed the whole day to be reread from the perspective of the Carceri. The spirit of prayer and devotion, care for mental and emotional health, safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults, and fraternal life find a common point in this alternation: learning to remain before God in order to remain with one's brothers. In a time marked by haste, weariness and multiple pastoral demands, the Under Ten friars were invited to develop and protect an evangelical rhythm, capable of integrating silence and word, inhabited solitude and communion, retreat and mission. In addition, the celebration of the Eucharist took place, as well as the guided visit with a moment of personal prayer. In the sanctuary of the Carceri, the brothers were able to experience that fraternity is strengthened when each person accepts being cared for by God and by others. From the mountain of Assisi, the Chapter was called to return to the valley with a light heart: ready to listen, to serve and to make of their own life a place where the Gospel continues to repair the common home of fraternity.





Round table discussion on the digital world, artificial intelligence, and care for our common home

July 9, 2026



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Thursday July 9, the sixth day of the Under Ten Chapter of Mats, began with the celebration of the Eucharist in language groups, nourishing in prayer the fraternal spirit that sustains the chapter process. Afterwards, Br Juan Isidro Aldana Maldonado, OFM offered a presentation on the preparation of the General Chapter 2027, providing an overall view of the horizon and the methodology of the journey leading to that gathering. It was reported that the General Chapter will be held in 2027 in Vietnam, with a synodal, fraternal, and spiritual emphasis, and with an approach that invites the Order to look at its life and mission from diverse contexts and cultures.

The heart of the morning was the round table discussion moderated by Br Daniel Nicolas Blanco, OFM, Director of the JPIC General Office, dedicated to three themes closely linked to the new frontiers of mission: the digital world, artificial intelligence, and care for our common home. In different ways, the interventions underlined that the task is not only

to understand tools or trends, but to discern how to proclaim the Gospel today with fidelity to the Franciscan charism and attentiveness to real questions of real people.



In the reflection on digital evangelization, it was emphasized that the digital environment cannot be reduced to a simple instrument: it is a “place” where many people live, search for meaning, and hope to be accompanied. A genuine “digital inculturation” was there-

fore proposed, capable of communicating the Gospel with understandable language, with a meaningful presence, and with a style that privileges closeness and listening. The presentation on artificial intelligence highlighted the anthropological, social, and ethical challenges posed by these technologies, especially regarding democratic life, the distribution of power, and the meaning of work. It was recalled that the decisive question is not only technical, but moral: responsibility remains in human hands, and for this reason it is necessary to form criteria and to foster a culture of evaluation, transparency, and correction.

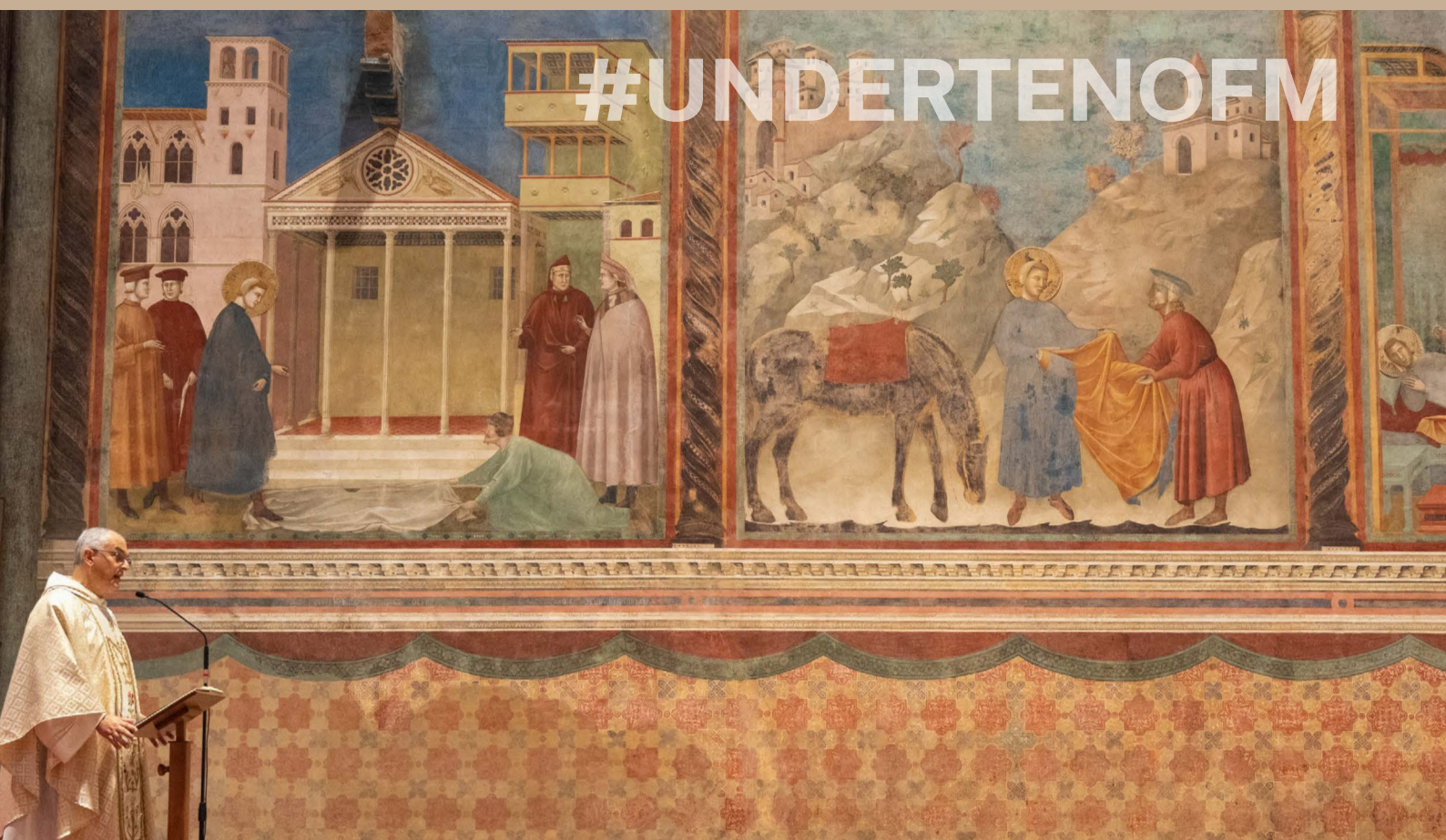
The reflection on care for our common home placed the socio-environmental crisis within the context of the cry of the earth and the poor, and highlighted the call to a conversion of heart as the foundation of any coherent response. It also underlined the importance of recovering practices and sensitivities rooted in the Franciscan tradition, as well as the value of celebrating and supporting processes that integrate liturgy, spirituality, and commitment into the care of our common home. In the dialogue, the need for a sober and discerning use of artificial intelligence was also noted, mindful of its energy and environmental impact, in harmony with the Franciscan principle that “less is more.”

After the coffee break, the brothers continued with spiritual conversation by Conferences, following the planned methodology for sharing resonances and contributions in a spirit



of prayer and fraternity. The day's program also included free time in the afternoon, understood as an opportunity for the brothers to visit individually those Franciscan places that could not be seen during the group visits. It is an appropriate time for contemplation, silence, and gratitude, strengthening the living memory of the charism and interior openness.





The Under Ten Chapter concludes in Assisi with a call to begin again from fraternity

Sent to safeguard the living present of the Order



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On Saturday, July 11, the brothers taking part in the VI Under Ten Chapter of Mats OFM concluded in Assisi the journey taken place during these days, marked by prayer, listening, discernment and the concrete experience of international fraternity. The day began with the departure for the Basilica of Saint Francis, where Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, presided at the votive Eucharist of Saint Francis of Assisi. In that place, a living memorial of Francis' Passover, the brothers were invited to reread the path of the Chapter in the light of the Gospel of the little ones, of the cross and of joy. In his homily, the Minister General recalled that the Father reveals his things "to those who remain little", and addressed this word to the friars in their first years, who had come from every continent. "You are those little ones of today", he said, inviting them to care for that inner place where vocation does not rely on one's own strength, but on trust in God. From the experience of Francis, who "did not understand the Gospel because he was wise", but because "he became little", Br Massimo pointed out that

the path of the Order is not born of efficiency, but of a form of life embraced with humility. The celebration in the Basilica made it possible to unite the itinerary of the Under Ten brothers with the VIII Centenary of the Passover of Saint Francis. In his reflection, the Minister General recalled that Francis "died poor, on the bare earth, calling death his sister", and that he did not simply undergo the Lord's Passover, but lived it. For this reason, celebrating the Eucharist at his tomb helped the brothers recognize that today too the cross remains the form of the Gospel life: "The yoke becomes easy not because it weighs less, but because we no longer carry it alone". From this certainty, the brothers were called to begin again from littleness, the cross and joy. After the Eucharist, the brothers took part in a guided visit to the Basilica, organized in language groups. The visit was led by the Conventual Friars Minor, who helped the participants discover the spiritual, historical and artistic richness narrated by its walls. Then, after returning to Domus Pacis, the morning continued with the approval of the proposals, prepared on

Friday through group work and discussion in assembly. The work carried out in the groups thus found a common form to be entrusted to the Entities, the Conferences and the next General Chapter. In the afternoon, the brothers voted on the final message and took part in the evaluation exercise; afterwards, they gathered again for the final greeting of the Minister General. Br Massimo began with a simple word: "Thank you". He thanked God, the participants who had come from the five continents, the General Definitory, those who prepared and animated the meeting, the translators and the Seraphic Province that welcomed the Chapter. In the year of the VIII Centenary of the Passover of Saint Francis, he recognized that the friars had brought to Assisi "something of the freshness of the origins: brothers seated on mats, formed by the Gospel and with the joy of being together". The Minister General gathered the resonances of what had been heard during these days, beginning with the vocational stories of the participants. He recalled that in many of them the same thread appears: the encounter with an authentic and joyful friar, with a simple fraternity close to the people. "None of you was won over by a speech. You were attracted by a form of life", he said, emphasizing that there is no more authentic vocational ministry than that of a friar who is happy in their vocation. Fragilities, fears and searches were also presented as places where one learns that God trusts each brother more than each one is able to trust themselves.

From the discernment of the groups, Br Massimo entrusted three orientations for the journey: to care for the center, to nurture fraternal bonds and to safeguard our humanity. Prayer was presented as the place that purifies motivations and brings one back to reality with a new gaze; fraternity, as a home where it is possible to speak of weariness, crises and wounds without fear of judgment; and our humanity, a task that is especially urgent in today's digital culture. In the face of artificial intelligence and new technological languages, the Minister General recalled that "no algorithm will be able to replace time spent before the Lord, nor the concrete humanity of an encounter". One of the words that resonated in the concluding greeting was the internationality of the Order. Hearing prayer in so many languages, seeing brothers search for words to understand one another and sharing songs from different cultures. Br Massimo said he had contemplated "the face of the Order that is being born: an international, young and plural Order".

This reality, he said, is not a projection toward the future, but a gift already present, seated on the mats. For this reason, he invited the brothers to learn languages as a form of minority and communion, to go beyond the borders of their own Provinces, to feel as an Order and to welcome the different nuances of the charism.

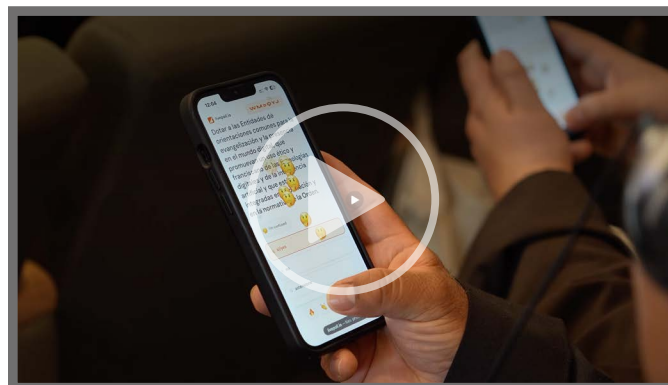


The path of the Chapter thus opened toward the return to the fraternities. The Minister General asked the brothers not to let these days remain a beautiful memory, but to return as witnesses: "Do not bring programs; bring a style of life". That style can begin with small and concrete gestures: a renewed way of living community prayer, a sincere word in the local Chapter, patient listening to an elderly brother, the daily study of a language. In each of these gestures, the possibility of making the Gospel present in ordinary life is expressed. In the closing celebration, the reflection returned to the Gospel form of setting out: "without sack, without bread, without money". Not as a deprivation, but as a freedom. The brothers were invited to return with open hands and burning hearts, carrying the joy of these days and a new fire to follow Christ in the spirit of Francis and Clare. After the final prayer for the friars of the Order, the blessing of the Tau took place, a sign of salvation and a memorial of Saint Francis. The Tau crosses, made by a local carpenter with wood from Assisi, were given as a simple sign of belonging and mission. In the same spirit, gratitude was expressed to those who made the experience possible: facilitators, group secretaries, translators, the communications team, the preparatory commission and all those who helped create a family atmosphere. With the official declaration of the closing of the VI Chapter of Mats Under Ten, the experience lived in Assisi reached its conclusion, but not its fruit. "Although our deliberations have ended, our work

has only just begun”, it was recalled before the return to the Provinces, Custodies, Foundations and ministries. The words inspired by Saint Francis remained as a final mandate: “Brothers, let us begin to do good, because until now we have done little or nothing”. Under the gaze of the Poverello, the friars were called to continue their vocation in the Church and in the world with simplicity, minority and hope.

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

Read the [Minister General's concluding greeting](#)



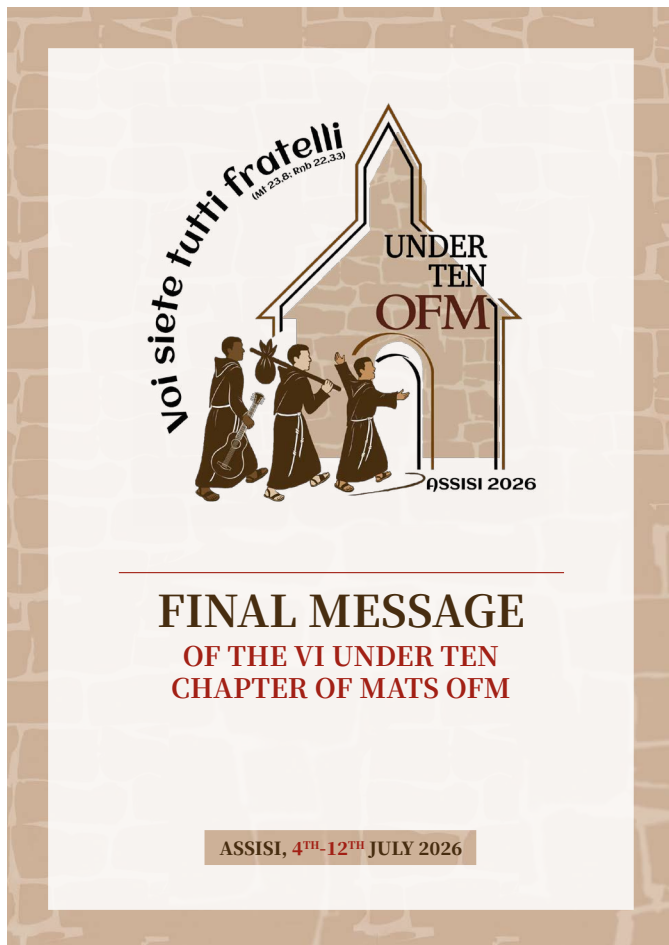
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Final Message of the VI Under Ten Chapter of Mats OFM



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Gathered in Assisi, in this year in which the Franciscan Family celebrates the VIII Centenary of the Easter of St. Francis of Assisi, we, Friars Minor with less than ten years of solemn profession (Under Ten), coming from the five continents of the world, wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja, the Brothers of the General Definitory, and the Seraphic Province of St. Francis for their hospitality. We would like to thank our Ministers Provincial and Custodes, for the opportunity they have given us to live this beautiful experience of universal fraternity in the VI Under Ten Chapter of Mats, with the motto: “You are all brothers”.

The Most High, omnipotent, and good Lord summoned us to this land that saw the birth of St. Francis and St. Clare. We have come as delegates of our Entities, bringing with us the stories, the joys, the wounds, the questions, and the hopes of the other Under Ten brothers, to

listen together to what the Spirit is saying to the Order today. During these days, we prayed with the Word, shared the Eucharist, recounted our vocational stories, discussed the challenges of our time, and visited the places where St. Francis discovered the Gospel as a way of life. Doing so, we have returned to the Franciscan sources of our vocation and our mission, renewing the desire to follow Christ in the way of St. Francis.

In sharing our vocation stories, we have recognized that God continues to call through the witness of authentic brothers and sisters, joyful and close to the people: a credible Franciscan life constitutes the first vocation ministry, capable not only of attracting new vocations, but of accompanying and sustaining them with fidelity. In our common discernment, we discovered that the first conversion to which the Lord calls us today is to a renewal of our personal and community relationship with him in the evangelical quality of our fraternal life. Rather than multiplying works or responding to new challenges, we are called to return to the Gospel lived in fraternity, making our communities places where prayer, listening, mutual care, co-responsibility, and service truly express that we are brothers and sisters.

On this same journey, we have recognized that authority among us is only truly evangelical when it is lived as service: a closeness that cares for the dignity of each brother or sister, listens before making decisions, promotes co-responsibility and animates a culture of respect and accompaniment, beginning with the service of the Guardian, called to be a sign of communion and fraternity.

We are aware of the tensions we experience in our fraternities – activism, individualism, superficiality in communication, unhealed wounds, clericalism, or generational distances – but we have also discovered that if we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit, fraternity recovers its evangelizing force. We want our fraternities to be a home, and not just a structure: places where each brother can confidently express his weariness, crises, and wounds without fear of judgment and to

allow himself to be accompanied – also with professional help when necessary. A fraternity where the brother can allow himself to be healed in order to be able, in turn, to accompany others.

We have also reflected on the peripheries of our time: the poor, the migrants, the victims of violence, the common home, those who seek meaning in the midst of digital culture, and those who live without hope. We feel the desire to renew our missionary vocation to evangelize and to be evangelized, so as to be present where humanity suffers and where the Gospel needs to be proclaimed with credible words, a coherent life, and a language capable of reaching people's hearts.

The Spirit has helped us to discover that digital culture, artificial intelligence, and the care of creation are scenarios in which we are called to live and proclaim the Gospel. We want to be present in these spaces with a humble, fraternal, and contemplative Franciscan presence, which always proclaims Christ before ourselves. A presence that utilizes technology as an instrument at the service of the person and

the mission, used responsibly and soberly, which also promotes the care of our Common Home as an expression of our fraternity and solidarity with all creation.

In an increasingly connected world, we wish to be brothers capable of foresting encounter, authentic and personal relationships, hope and communion, a people convinced that the witness of an evangelical life remains the most credible proclamation of the Gospel.

To sustain this journey, we feel the need for an initial and ongoing formation that integrates the elements of prayer, fraternity, mission, and human maturity. A formation that educates for the service of authority, discernment, and co-responsibility, and that prepares for a mature evangelical presence in digital culture.

We believe that the Spirit continues to stir up creativity, missionary passion and hope in our Order. As we approach the General Chapter of 2027, we wish to offer, in a spirit of co-responsibility, the fruits of the discernment lived during this VI Chapter of Mats. Thus, we present the following proposals, born of prayer, listening



to the Word, fraternal dialogue, and the shared search for God's will, as a humble contribution to the renewal of our life and mission.

Proposal to the Entities:

To strengthen a quality ongoing formation for the Under Ten friars through a specific itinerary of human, fraternal and missionary accompaniment, capable of responding to the challenges of the different cultural realities of the Order, as well as those of mental health and integral care.

Proposal to the Conferences:

Establish interprovincial and international collaboration through exchange projects for friars (even for extended periods), common formation projects, pastoral and missionary projects, sharing of experiences and language learning.

Proposal to the 2027 General Chapter:

To promote the participation of Under Ten representatives of each Conference in the Gener-

al Chapter. To revise the Ratio formationis in harmony with the Ratio evangelizationis, so that it offers adequate responses to the challenges of the digital world and promotes an ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

At the conclusion of this VI Chapter of the Mats, we return to our fraternities with a renewed desire to live the Gospel, convinced that the Franciscan vocation continues to be beautiful, meaningful, and necessary. With Mary, Queen of Angels and under the protection of our Father St. Francis and St. Clare, we return to our homes and friaries carrying the same certainty in our hearts: "You are all brothers".

Peace and all Good!

*The Under Ten brothers
together with the Minister General
and the General Definitory*

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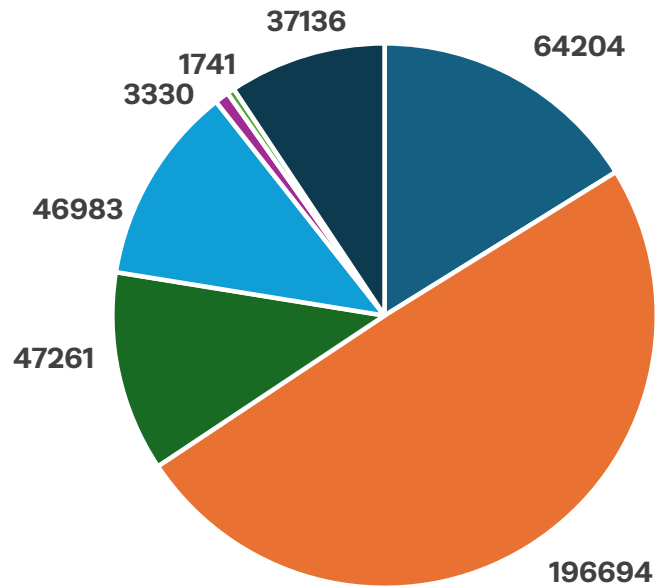
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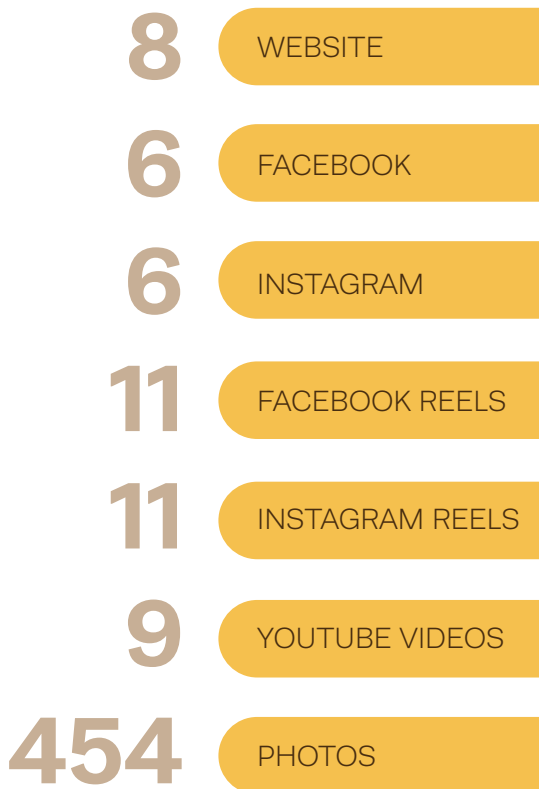
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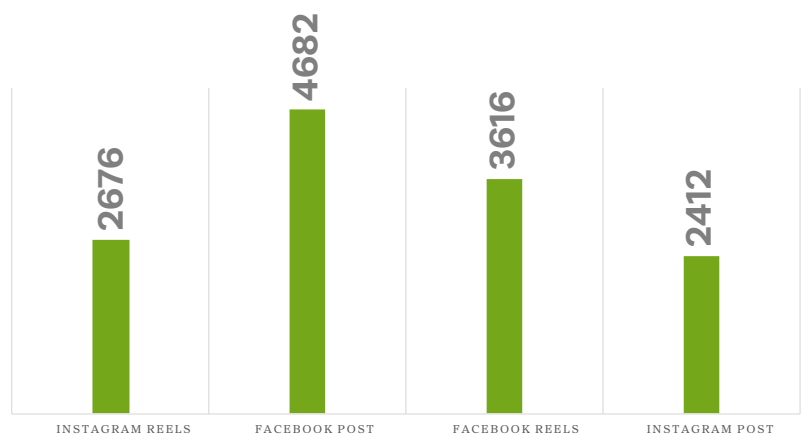


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Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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