



A Letter from the Chapter of Mats of the Young Friars

Canindé, July 21-28, 2001

*If a person dreams alone, it's just a dream, but if many dream together, then something
new begins.
(Helder Camara)*

Dear brothers, Peace and all good!

From Canindé in the state of Ceará, which is situated in the Northeast of Brazil, from amongst a humble people, poor and Franciscan at heart, we would like to thank the General Minister, Br. Giacomo Bini, the General Vicar, Br. Estêvão Ottenbreit, the friars of the General Definitory, our Provincial Ministers, Custodes and our respective Provinces for the opportunity to live this experience of fraternity, poverty and sharing with brothers representing all the conferences of the Order (165 friars from 50 countries). We give heartfelt thanks to the Provincial Minister of the Province of San Antonio of Brazil, Br. Alusio Fragoso; the Guardian and Pastor, Br. Carlos Antonio, and all the brothers of this Province who hosted the meeting.

As a result of these days in Canindé, we wish to say to all the friars of the Order that we feel happy to be Friars Minor and that we wish to commit ourselves to the establishment of contemplative and evangelizing fraternities, in order to be a prophetic sign at the beginning of the third millennium. We feel the need to follow Christ, poor and crucified, living the Gospel radically.

We also recognise that at times we experience emotional crises and feel alone, often tempted to fill this isolation with work (activism) or with other forms of escape which eventually discourage our following of Christ. Therefore we need brothers who, with their wisdom and experience, can accompany us on our attempts to be faithful to our religious consecration. We think it urgent that our different entities develop ongoing formation so as to avoid the rupture which can arise between what we experience in initial formation and what we experience in ongoing formation.

In this meeting, we have rediscovered essential elements of our Franciscan religious vocation and we feel called to construct a fraternity that is contemplative and evangelizing. We are encouraged to open our minds and hearts to the universal dimensions of the Franciscan Order, to support international projects, without forgetting the love and unity we feel for our provinces. It seems necessary to us that we foster within our fraternities relationships that are full of trust and creativity, where constructive dialogue and reciprocal



service are possible, living as brothers who share the same bread and also each other's joys and pains.

We think it is worthwhile trying experiences similar to this Chapter of Mats in the various conferences of the Order, to continue cultivating fraternal relationships which give life, renew the spirit of faith, and foster the hope of a rejuvenated Order. We have come to realize that, with a little good will, it is possible to have fraternal relationships based on simplicity, and that communal life is more solid when based on an encounter with the Word of God and the sacramental life. Even today, it is still possible to form prophetic fraternities, inserted amongst the poor, who are the privileged place for the incarnation of the Franciscan charism.

Therefore we propose:

- Along with the General Definitory, we will communicate our dreams and desires to each Province so that we may motivate our Ministers Provincial to make possible what we have lived and experienced during these days in Canindé, and what we young friars feel at this moment in our lives.
- We suggest that the Provincial Ministers support the accompaniment of the friars in the first few years after their solemn profession and establish clear channels of communication between them as they are carefully inserted into the provincial fraternities.
- We propose that the Ministers Provincial promote the creation of fraternities or hermitages where the Rule of Hermitage or other experiences of prayer is lived or adapted.
- We propose that each Province, Vice-Province and Custody support and promote a fraternity given to social insertion or itinerancy which would be composed of both young and not so young friars.
- We encourage the Ministers Provincial to invite the young friars to gather for periodical meetings amongst themselves and with friars of the different conferences of the Order.

We bid a fond farewell to the devout, faith-filled people of Canindé with thanksgiving to them for deepening our faith in God, our Lord, and our Father Francis. We ask God's blessing to descend on each person in Canindé. We also ask God to bless us with strength and grace to continue our journey, living the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Young friars from around the world
Delegates to the Chapter of Mats
Canindé - Ceará - Brazil