



A final message to all friars

V Chapter Under Ten OFM: The Taizé declaration on dialogue

Taizé, July 7-14, 2019

On these days of July 7-14, 2019, we Friars Minor, who are less than 10 years Solemnly professed (under 10), from all over the world on the occasion of V Chapter Under Ten OFM have gathered at Taizé, France to reflect on the theme 'Friars in Dialogue'.

This celebration was enriched by the participation of 181 friars minor (representing 5 continents, 15 conferences of the Order, 86 entities, 52 Nationalities), together with General Minister Michael Perry, his vicar, definitors and the organizing committee. Adding colour to this celebration, we were accompanied by the wider community of Taizé, who hosted both the Friars and almost 2000 people from all over the world.

The theme of the chapter was 'Friars in Dialogue' which was proposed in 3 phases of reflection: pre-Chapter, Chapter and post-Chapter.

As a conclusion of this time of special grace, the following observations can be stated unequivocally with regards to the theme 'Friars in dialogue' for future perspectives:

1. The question of dialogue is essential now for peaceful coexistence. The context where we are in, the community of Taizé, gives us the concrete context to cultivate trust and friendship. Examples such as these call us to periodic revaluation of previously held preconceptions. As based on the talks this week, the following points were noted.

- a. The General Minister emphasized that dialogue in the life of the friar minor means vocation in fraternity – love of God, love of neighbour, and love of all creation. Contemplating the Trinity, we enter into relationship and community that is in our very DNA. In his talk he emphasized that the quality of fraternal dialogue as the central theme which calls finding creative ways to deal with crisis.
- b. The Prior of Taizé stressed acknowledging one's own personal limitations as a first step toward dialogue. Being rooted in our own faith as followers of Christ, we need not fear dialoguing with others, and we should be careful of reducing them to our own categories.
- c. The General Secretary of Formation and Studies, in his reflection about the model of dialogue offered by St. Francis of Assisi and the first Franciscan fraternity,



pointed out the importance of accepting conflicts as an inevitable part of any dialogue. He encouraged the young friars gathered at Taizé to be enriched by the experiences of friars from the entities who are living the aspects of dialogue without any choices of their own. Our Franciscan brothers lived on this hill of Taizé from 1964 to 1972, and we felt staying here that it's a place of grace which provides dialogue with Christ in prayer and praise even as a dialogue with the world and especially with believers of other religions. Listening and accompanying the people of God, brothers from the community are witnessing the ecumenical journey and the search for unity.

2. As Friars Minor, we have a rich tradition of dialogue and openness, beginning with St. Francis and his encounter with Sultan of Egypt 'Al Malik al Kamal' (1219). This tradition was testified and enlarged by under ten brothers gathered here from all over the world, by listening and sharing our thoughts and opinions in different language groups. Knowing that dialogue begins from the heart, first of all one needs to listen and accept others without prejudices and fears in the fast changing society with its technological developments. At the same time in this openness, the various challenges - like social and cultural differences, tensions between real and virtual world, generation gaps, individualism - are to be confronted in our fraternal living.

We, Friars Minor, declare the following: Realizing the enormous difficulty in dialogue and openness in the world of ours with its temptations of hatred, division and violence and superiority, we are able to learn from our experience here at Taizé together with our own rich tradition as friars minor, to cultivate concrete moments of dialogue, openness, tolerance, and acceptance. We can see the other not as a threat to our existence but rather as a source of richness. We profess to carry and communicate this experience in living gospel values in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

We friars, who are gathered in the V Chapter Under Ten OFM, first of all thank the Almighty for the innumerable ways that He guides and directs us, through the powerful intercession of Mary Immaculate. We are grateful to our General Minister Michael Perry and the General Definitory who have convoked this chapter, the organizing committee, the friars from the province in France, and all the provinces who have made an extra effort to send delegates for this chapter. And finally, and not the least, we thank the community of Taizé, for their hospitality and friendship that they have extended to each one of us.

Peace and all good!

*Your under ten brothers
together with the Minister General and his Definitory*