

## Contents

<b>The Minister general of the Order of Friars Minor</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1. The spirit of prayer and devotion</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>A Fraternity with its heart turned to God in order to announce to the world, through life and word, that He alone is Almighty</i>	
The Life Project .....	9
Proposals .....	10
Listening .....	12
Reflecting .....	13
<b>2. Fraternal communion</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<i>A Fraternity in loving obedience and reciprocal service in order to give testimony to reconciliation in Christ beyond all fractures.</i>	
The Life Project .....	17
Proposals .....	18
Listening .....	20
Reflecting .....	21
<b>3. Minority, poverty and solidarity</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<i>A Fraternity of minors, poor and in solidarity, pilgrim and stranger, walking the streets of the world in the footprints of Jesus in order to proclaim the value of every man and every creature</i>	
The Life Project .....	25
Proposals .....	27
Listening .....	28
Reflecting .....	29
<b>4. Evangelisation-Mission</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<i>A Fraternity that is nourished by the Gospel in order to offer the Word that is “spirit and life” to humanity, which is uneasy and in search of a meaning to life.</i>	
The Life Project .....	33
Proposals .....	34
Listening .....	36
Reflecting .....	37
<b>5. Formation and Studies</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<i>A Fraternity that arose through divine inspiration, called each day to conversion and new life in order to grow as a “Fraternity-in-mission”.</i>	
The Life Project .....	41
Proposals .....	42
Listening .....	44
Reflecting .....	45
<b>Abbreviations and acronyms.</b> .....	<b>46</b>

# FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST FOR A FRATERNAL WORLD

A GUIDE FOR A MORE PROFOUND STUDY  
AND APPLICATION OF THE PRIORITIES  
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR (2003-2009)

General curia OFM  
Rome 2004

Rnb *Non Approved Rule.*  
 1Test *Testament of Siena.*  
 2Test *Testament.*

### *The Writings of St. Clare of Assisi*

3LtAg *Third Letter to Agnes of Prague.*  
 4LtAg *Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague*

### *Other Acronyms*

GGCC *General Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor.*  
 FEG *“To Fill the Whole Earth with the Gospel of Christ”,  
 The Minister General to the Friars Minor on evangelisation: from memory to prophesy, Rome 1996,  
 n. 38.*  
 FLC *Fraternal Life in Community, CIVCVSVA, 1994.*  
 LgP *May the Lord give you Peace, Document of the  
 General Chapter 2003, Rome 2003.*  
 PRMG *Presentation of the Report of the Minister General  
 to the Chapter, Assisi 2003.*  
 RFF *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae, General Curia,  
 Rome 2003.*  
 RMG *Report of the Minister General to the General  
 Chapter 2003.*  
 RS *Ratio Studiorum “In notitia veritatis proficere”,  
 General Curia, Rome 2001.*

## Abbreviations and acronyms

### Sacred Scripture

Col	<i>Letter to the Colossians.</i>
1Cor	<i>First Letter to the Corinthians.</i>
Eph	<i>Letter to the Ephesians.</i>
Gal	<i>Letter to the Galatians.</i>
Hb	<i>Letter to the Hebrews.</i>
Jm	<i>Letter of James.</i>
Jn	<i>The Gospel according to John.</i>
1Jn	<i>First Letter of John.</i>
Lk	<i>The Gospel according to Luke.</i>
Mk	<i>The Gospel according to Mark.</i>
Mt	<i>The Gospel according to Matthew.</i>
1Pt	<i>The First Letter of Peter.</i>
Rm	<i>The Letter to the Romans.</i>

### The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

Abs	<i>The Prayer “Absorbeat”.</i>
Adm	<i>Admonitions.</i>
1Cel	<i>First Life of St. Francis, of Thomas of Celano.</i>
2Cel	<i>Second Life of St. Francis, of Thomas of Celano.</i>
3Comp	<i>Legend of the Three Companions.</i>
LegM	<i>The Major Legend, of St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio.</i>
LegP	<i>The Legend of Perugia.</i>
LtAn	<i>Letter to Br. Anthony.</i>
LtCust	<i>Letter to all the Custodes.</i>
2LtF	<i>Letter to all the Faithful (2<sup>nd</sup> redaction).</i>
LtM	<i>Letter to a Minister.</i>
LtOrd	<i>Letter to the whole Order.</i>
LW	<i>Last Will (to St. Clare).</i>
PrGA	<i>Praises of God Almighty.</i>
Rb	<i>Approved Rule.</i>

## The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor

Dear Brothers,  
May the Lord give you peace!

The General Chapter of Pentecost 2003, having evaluated the progress of the Order during the previous six years, requested our Fraternity to continue in the same direction as indicated by the *five priorities of the Order* for the near future also. These, in fact, have aroused new interest in and renewed enthusiasm for the life and mission of the Friars and of the Entities. They continue to be “a key in reading how to live our identity and to understand the expectations of the world” (*LgP* 4) and a *stimulus* to becoming signs of hope and prophets in the present-day world.

As those primarily responsible for the animation of our Fraternity, the Definitory General felt the duty of immediately giving a response to the request of the Chapter. As was already announced in the Letter for the solemnity of St. Francis, it approved, during the “tempo forte” of November, a *guide-document* on the aspects of our life that are fundamental to our spirituality and indispensable in living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with an awareness of this that I entrust the fruits of the reflection of the Definitory General to every Fraternity and to each Friar so that it may be a help and a guide in understanding what is truly essential today for living the ‘sequela’ of Christ and for putting our *forma vitae* at the service of the Church and the world.

It is important, then, to allow oneself be involved in the process of studying deeply, of applying and evaluating each *priority* in accordance with the indications of the *guide-document* through prayer, reflection and both personal and com-

munity study. It is a question, in fact, of a *Guide for the profound study and application of the Priorities of the Order of Friars Minor (2003-2009)*, which presents reasons, concrete proposals for life, suggestions for reading in the profound study and points for personal and community reflection on each *priority*. In addition, taking into account the recent progress of the Order, which is described as a Fraternity-in-mission, the *guide-document* revisits each *priority* from the perspective of the *Fraternity* and in view of the *Mission*: coupling it, that is, with our particular characteristic and our reason for existing.

Let us set out, Brothers! We know the direction: the five priorities. We have a guide: the present document that I am sending to the Friars and Entities. It is not to do anything beyond what is requested by our life and mission, rather is it to live the particular values of the Franciscan charism as *followers of Christ for a fraternal world*.

Rome, 8<sup>th</sup> December, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 2003.

*Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, ofm  
Minister General*

Prot. n. 093848

## REFLECTING

- a. How do we favour the formation of Formators?
- b. Is the local Chapter of formation provided for in the *Fraternity Life Project*?
- c. How can we evaluate the level of fulfilment and efficiency of our formation meetings?
- d. What relationship should be established between formation-conversion and study-evangelisation?
- e. How are the Friars in temporary profession accompanied, especially during the period of academic studies or professional formation?
- f. Through which experiences of Franciscan life, such as minority, insertion and missions, do we form our young Friars?

## Listening and Reflecting

### LISTENING

#### Gospel

- Mt 25,14-30; Mk 8,31-15,46 (*a formative journey*); Lk 2,52; 6,48-49

#### St. Francis

- Rb 10,8; Adm 7; 2Cel 103.

#### Order

- *General Constitutions*, 126-167.
- *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, 40-61.
- *Orientations for the pastoral care of vocations*, pp. 45ff.
- *Ratio Studiorum OFM*, 13.22.
- *Report to the General Chapter 2003*, 124-144.

#### Church

- *Fraternal Life in Community* 43.
- *Vita Consecrata* 64-71; 98.
- *Starting afresh from Christ* 15-19.

## Introduction

The document of the Pentecost 2003 General Chapter, *May the Lord give you peace*, contains an urgent invitation to conversion, “to be born again”, “to undertake the path of gospel discernment” (cfr. *LgP*, Presentation) in order to be able, as Friars Minor, to respond to the challenges of the present-day world and to “discover imaginatively and creatively new paths for new situations” (*FEG* 38).

The invitation to conversion could have a concrete response if we would recover the vigour of our experience of faith, if, through the profession of the gospel life, we would return to the essentials of our spirituality (cfr. *LgP* 2).

For this reason, the 2003 General Chapter proposed that, during the six-year period 2003-2009, the Order should “continue in the direction undertaken by our Fraternity as is expressed in the *Five Priorities of the Order*, because we think that they continue to be ‘a key in reading’ how to live our identity and to understand the expectations of the world” (*LgP* 4).

To put the will of the Chapter into practice, the Minister and his Definitory decided to offer to the attention of the Friars a *guide-document* on the aspects of our life that we consider essential to our spirituality and indispensable for living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The *guide-document* again proposes the *Priorities* of the Order and it develops them in the light of the Chapter theme of “Fraternity-in-mission”. Each Priority is re-visited in the perspective of the *Fraternity*, which it is its special characteristic, and of the *Mission*, which is its reason for being.

keeping in mind the indications of the document *Ongoing Formation in the Order of Friars Minor*.

6. In both ongoing and initial formation particular attention should be paid to accompaniment of the Friars, especially of those that are in the first five years of solemn profession.
7. The Entities and the Fraternities should find suitable means to accompany the old and sick Friars.
8. Each Entity, keeping in mind all that is prescribed in the *Ratio Studiorum O.F.M.*, should encourage the intellectual formation and training in different disciplines of the Friars.
9. All Entities, in accordance with their possibility, should collaborate with “The Fund for Formation and Studies” as a sign of solidarity with the needy Entities.

initial and ongoing formation as well as between the different stages of initial formation (cfr. *RFF* 177). Studies are essential in regard to the journey of maturation of the person (cfr. *RS* 31)

## Proposals

1. Each Province must elaborate its own *Initial and Ongoing Formation Project*, as well as its *Project for the Pastoral Care of Vocations* and *Ratio Studiorum*, always taking into account the documents of the Order in this regard. An evaluation of these projects should be carried out during every Chapter.
2. The Definitory General, through the Secretariat for Formation and Studies, should organise an International Congress for Novice Masters and an International Congress for the Moderators of ongoing formation during the six-year period.
3. The Definitory General, through the Secretariat for Formation and Studies, should accompany the Study and Research Centres of the Order, especially those that depend on the Minister General, in all that regards both the programmes of study and of research so that they correspond to the principles of the *Ratio Studiorum O.F.M.* and to the needs of the Order by involving new professors and researchers and finding adequate economic means.
4. There should be a greater exchange of programmes of formation and a greater collaboration within them, especially for ongoing formation, between the different Entities, especially those of the same Conference.
5. The Ministers and Guardians, in animating respectively the provincial and local Fraternities, should pay particular attention to the ongoing formation of the Friars,

## 1.

### The spirit of prayer and devotion

*A Fraternity with its heart turned to God in order to announce to the world, through life and word, that He alone is Almighty.*

The capacity to give testimony that God is the only absolute, the only all-powerful, the most high and good Lord, the only good, all good, the only reality that is desirable and to be desired is derived from the priority of “the spirit of prayer and devotion”.

*“It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on you’” (Mk 1,9-11).*

## The Life Project

The Friars should wholeheartedly assume the obligation of ongoing and initial formation in order to follow Christ in prayer, to have a theological experience of being a son, to learn to be brothers among ourselves, to grow each day in identification with the poor and crucified Christ, to know the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ better and to announce it through word and deed. A suitable and skilled formation is an indispensable condition for improving the quality and credibility of our life and mission, for transmitting our *forma vitae* to the candidates and to announce and propose the Franciscan charism to the young of today.

Formation is necessarily a life-long journey for each Friar and Fraternity during which one's talents, gospel witness and vocational option are developed. (cfr. *GGCC* 135).

Each Friar has the final and decisive responsibility to take care of his own formation and to bring it to a conclusion (cfr. *GGCC* 137, 1) since the responsibility to reach the fulness of consecration to God, of donation to the brothers, of an ever greater fidelity in following Christ and of fulfilling our mission is personal.

Though the responsibility to take care of one's formation is personal, the primary place for formation is, nevertheless, the Fraternity (cfr. *GGCC* 173, 2), just as the Church community is for every Christian and the family community is for every person.

If we do not want the personal obligation and the formative capacity to ever lose their vigour, however, the Ministers and Guardians should be careful, helped by the Chapters of all grades, to stimulate and plan ongoing formation and to provide the necessary means (cfr. *GGCC* 137, 3).

Initial formation has its *humus* in ongoing formation (cfr. *RFF* 108). There must be continuity and coherence between

## The Life Project

Through Jesus the heavens, which up to then seemed to be exclusive to the life of God, were opened and now are shown as the life of man, the life of Jesus, who walks with other men that enter with Him into the waters of the baptism of conversion. A similar experience puts a new humanity in motion, a new people: first of all Jesus, then the followers of Jesus, from the first disciples down to us.

“Follow me”, Jesus says (*Mk 1,17*); “listen to Him”, says the Father (*Mk 9,7*). In these words the call to follow Jesus resounds, to become in this way part of the new humanity, to receive the Spirit and to listen to the voice of the most surprising divine voice: “You are My Son!”

The experience of being sons through the Spirit, who dwells in us, is the basis of our life of prayer, of “the spirit of prayer and devotion”, to which all other things must submit from the moment that, “removing every impediment and setting aside every care and anxiety”, we are called to “serve, love, honour and adore the Lord God with a clean heart and a pure mind” (cfr. *GGCC 19 §2*).

The life of prayer, the “spirit of prayer and devotion”, is the most important form, among various forms, with which our relationship of love with the Father is expressed. The life of prayer, like love, is not something that is done, but something that is lived with one’s whole being (cfr. *LgP 27b*) and at all times. Prayer, therefore, like love, moulds our personal relationship with the Lord in a new way.

The Friars incorporated into Christ through baptism, having shown their will to follow Him more closely through their profession, must fix their gaze on “this mirror every day” in order to imitate the blessed poverty, the holy humility and the ineffable charity that shine forth in it (cfr. *4LAg 15ff*).

It therefore follows that, if we speak of “the spirit of prayer and devotion” in the life of the Friar Minor, we must not only draw attention to the concrete expressions of this “spirit”, but to the relationship that we live with God the Father, with Jesus Christ the Lord and with the Spirit that sanctifies.

## Proposals

1. The *Personal Life Project* and the *Fraternity Life Project* indicate the times and ways of personal and Fraternity prayer so that the personal activities and the structures of the Entities do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion.
2. The *Personal Life Project* and the *Fraternity Life Project* should duly value the times of silence and everyone should recover the value of interiority and of silence, just as *the journey towards the ‘place of the heart’* proposes.
3. The Ministers, in their service of animation of their respective Entities and of all the Friars individually, should consider the life of prayer and the “spirit of prayer and devotion” as the priority that orientates and animates their life, the first expression of the following of Christ.
4. The Ministers and Guardians, while keeping in mind what is said in the documents *The Heart Turned to the Lord* and *The Spirit of Prayer and Devotion*, should promote the life of prayer in its different expressions, paying special attention to new forms of prayer and to prayer with the people.
5. The Ministers should encourage and exhort the Friars to carry out prolonged experiences of contemplation in Retreat Houses and Hermitages, taking advantage of the *moratorium* to deepen the experience of God.

## 5.

### Formation and Studies

*A Fraternity that arose through divine inspiration, called each day to conversion and new life in order to grow as a “Fraternity-in-mission”.*

The formative obligation, from vocational accompaniment to ongoing and initial formation, has the aim of helping to discern the divine inspiration through which the Lord gives new brothers and to support the ‘sequela’ so that each Friar and Fraternity may walk with perseverance in the footprints of Jesus and be His witnesses in the world.

*“He now went up into the hills and summoned those He wanted. So they came to Him and He appointed twelve to be His companions and be sent out to preach” (Mk 3, 13-14)*

6. A commission to animate the contemplative dimension of the Entities should be appointed in Provincial or Custody Chapters.
7. The Ministers and Friars should try to unite prayer and practical life in a more vital way.
8. In order to meet with Christ and with one's self and so re-discover the treasure of the vocation, it would be opportune that a *moratorium* be made about the time of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of profession (cfr. *RMG*, 60).
9. Moved by the Spirit of the Lord to live the form of life of the Holy Gospel and recognising the urgency of turning to the essentials of our experience of faith and of our spirituality (cfr. *LgP* 2), the Friars should dedicate themselves with perseverance to listening to the Word of God, meditated and prayed. Therefore, the aid *The Prayerful Reading of the Word of God*, among others, should be used.
10. The Friars should be assured of an appropriate biblical and liturgical formation during both ongoing and initial formation.
11. The Friars should honour the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lord and our Mother with special devotion (cfr. *GGCC* 26 §2) and they should venerate the Saints, faithful followers of Christ and of His Most Holy Mother.
12. The Friars should commit themselves to knowing the Franciscan mystical and spiritual tradition and to recovering the devotional forms of our spiritual tradition, enriching it with new forms that correspond to the demands of our times better.
13. Each Fraternity and each Friar should evaluate their prayer life and the way of living the spirit of prayer and devotion at least once a year.

## Listening and Reflecting

### LISTENING

#### The Gospel

- *Jesus prays*: Mk 1,35; 14,32-39; Lk 3,21-22; 5,15-16; 6,12; 9,28-36; 22,39-46; 23,33-34.44-46.
- *The invitation to prayer*: Mk 6,30-32; 14,38; Lk 10,38-42; 18,1.
- *How to pray*: Mt 6,5-13; Mk 11,25; Lk 11,1-13.
- *Prayer born of the experience of faith*: Mt 8,1-4 and parallels; Mt 8,5-13 and parallels; Mt 9,18-19 and parallels; Mt 20,29-34 and parallels; Lk 5,4-11; 15,11-32; 23, 39-43.

#### St. Francis

- *Francis prays*: 2Cel 10.94-95; LegM 2,1; LegPer 80.93.
- *Invitation to pray*: Rnb 7,12; 22,26; Rb 5,2; 10,9; LtAn 2.
- *How to pray*: Rnb 23,1-6; LOrd 50; Lauds and prayers.
- *The Gospel, form of life of the Friars*: Rnb Prologue; 5,17; 22, 41; Rb 1,1; 2,5; 3,13-14; 12,4; 2Test 14.
- *Prayer born of the experience of faith*: Abs; 2Lf 61.

#### Order

- *General Constitutions*, 19-31.
- *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, 12-16; 66-69.
- *The heart turned to the Lord*.
- *The spirit of prayer and devotion*.
- *“To fill the Whole Earth with the Gospel of Christ”*, 111-113.
- *The journey towards the “place of the heart”*, Rome, 2003.
- *Report to the General Chapter 2003*, 54-55.

#### Church

- *Fraternal Life in Community*, 12-20.
- *Vita Consecrata*, 93-95.
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 32-39.
- *Starting afresh from Christ*, 20-27.

### REFLECTING

- How do we, as Friars Minor, respond to the challenges, urgencies and stimuli of our times?
- What does it mean to affirm that the Friar Minor evangelises first of all through his life? What consequences does such an affirmation have for our life and the life of the Fraternity?
- What does it mean to be a missionary today?
- What are the main characteristics of Franciscan evangelisation today?
- To what extent do we support the missionary projects of the Order? What discernment do we carry out on the personnel we send out?
- How do we encourage young Friars to assume the missionary spirit and to make themselves available for the Franciscan missions?
- How do we animate the laity, especially the Fra.Youth and SFO, in the missionary spirit and towards collaboration with our missions?

## Listening and Reflecting

### LISTENING

#### The Gospel

- *Jesus, sent by the Father*: Mt 10,40; 15,21-28; Mk 9,33-37; Lk 4,16-21.42-44; 9,46-48; 10,16; Jn 3,13-17; 4,34; 5,19-38; 6, 22-57; 7,14-34; 8,1-42; 9,4; 10,36; 11,42; 12,44-50; 13,20; 14,24; 15,21; 16,5; 17,1-26.
- *The mission of the disciples*: Mt 10,1-33; 28,16-20; Mk 16,15-16; Lk 24,44-49; Jn 17,18-19; Rm 10,14-15; 1Cor 9,15-18; Eph 3,1-12; Col 1,24-29.

#### St. Francis

- *Among the Saracens and others*: Rnb 16,1-19; Rb 12,1-2.
- *Preachers*: Rnb 17,1-20; Rb 9,1-4.
- *Sermons*: LtCust 9-10.

#### Order

- *General Constitutions*, 83-125.
- *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, 26-29.
- *“To Fill the Earth with the Gospel of Christ”*, 69-87.
- *Orientations for the Pastoral Care of Vocations*, pp. 55ss.
- *Report to the General Chapter 2003*, 109-123; 146-170.

#### Church

- *Fraternal Life in Community*, 58-70.
- *Vita Consecrata*, 72-103.
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 40.58.
- *Starting afresh from Christ*, 37.

### REFLECTING

- Have we the joy and peace of the children of God in our hearts?
- How does the faith we profess influence our personal life and the life of our Fraternities? Do we live by faith?
- Do we obey the Spirit that is now within us?
- How does life with “the heart turned to God” help us to overcome conflicts and personal interests?
- Do we allow God to enter into our life and transform it as happened with St. Francis?
- What are the challenges, on the personal and fraternity levels, that come to us from the life of prayer and devotion?
- Which elements of our spirituality do we consider essential?
- Do the *Personal Life Project* and the *Fraternity Life Project* provide space and time for listening to the Word of God? How do our Fraternities celebrate and live the Eucharist?
- What relationship do the Eucharist and the Cross have with everyday renunciation, with obedience, etc.?
- What is our attitude to the commitment and fidelity to prayer of other Friars?
- Do we consider the prayer life of committed lay people, of Church groups and even of the faithful of other religions a provocation or a stimulus for our own life?
- What are the obstacles that we meet in our commitment to prayer?

- 8.** The Friars, attentive to the signs of the times, should work out new responses to the problems of the present-day world. They should consider discernment, therefore, as a fundamental requirement in order to clearly perceive what must be done and to know how to translate it decisively into coherent choices through projects of evangelisation that correspond to present situations.
- 9.** The Friars should carry out periodic reviews of the pastoral work they are doing in order to discern if it corresponds to the spirit of the Beatitudes and promotes the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world (cfr. *LgP* 41).
- 10.** The Friars, in all their activities of evangelisation, should seek and promote the collaboration of the laity, suitably taking care of their formation.
- 11.** Among all the forms of evangelisation, the Friars should take due consideration of popular missions, renewing the methods in accordance with present-day requirements.
- 12.** The Friars should pay special attention to the evangelisation of young people. The Entities that have Colleges or manage Scholastic Centres, should offer young people a formation that is inspired by gospel and Franciscan values.
- 13.** Those who feel themselves called to serve the Gospel in other cultures and among peoples different to their own, should be suitably formed in the international Fraternity of Brussels or in other Fraternities established for this end. They should respect, with profound sensitivity, the characteristics of the people where they go, they should learn their language and incarnate the Gospel into their religious, historical and cultural values as well as into their customs and traditions.

## Proposals

1. Each Province and Fraternity should elaborate its own *Project of Evangelisation*, which should serve as a guide for all activities of evangelisation and to give an impulse to new forms and methods of evangelisation in communion with the Church and in harmony with our *forma vitae*, especially with our life of Fraternity.
2. During the six-year period the Definitory General should organise, through the Secretariat for Evangelisation, Congresses on Evangelisation in general, preferably by cultural regions, and a Congress for the whole Order on Missionary Evangelisation.
3. The Entities and Conferences should strengthen the traditional bonds with the missions they began. Each Conference should feel obliged to maintain a project of the Order, whether it already exists or is being created, following the invitation of the Pope: “Duc in altum!”.
4. All Entities should commit themselves with greater enthusiasm to the missionary projects of the Order such as those of the Holy Land, Morocco, The Commonwealth of Independent States, Thailand... The Ministers should diligently examine the missionary vocation of the Friars and not obstruct it for reasons of usefulness.
5. All Entities should consider study as a fundamental requirement for evangelisation.
6. Every Entity should send 6% of the offerings collected for the missions to the Secretariat for Evangelisation each year.
7. The primary and fundamental form of evangelisation of the Friars is their life of communion in Fraternity.

## 2.

### Fraternal communion

*A Fraternity in loving obedience and reciprocal service in order to give testimony to reconciliation in Christ beyond all fractures.*

From the capacity to live obedience and reciprocal service in Fraternity, thus giving a practical nature to being brothers-in-relationship, is born the possibility to testify that Christ is our peace, our reconciliation, He that has unified humanity disintegrated by sin.

*“If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing... Love is always patient and kind; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth... Love does not come to an end” (1Cor 13,1-8).*

## The Life Project

Called by the Lord and moved by the Holy Spirit, we are sent into the whole world to proclaim the Gospel to every creature so that all may know the grace and love that God the Father has revealed and offered to us in Christ Jesus (cfr. GGCC 83 §3). The peace and goodness we wish to bring to all we meet on our journey are in the Gospel of grace and love. Through the Gospel we wish to transmit the firm hope of a better world to all (cfr. GGCC 83). This is the salvation that we ask and desire for all: “*May the Lord give you peace (2Test 23).*”

To announce the Gospel, to bring the peace that God has given us through Christ to all (cfr. Hb 10,36), to announce Christ, who is our peace (cfr. Eph 2,14), is the vocation of the Church, it is its mission (cfr. LgP 37).

To announce and realise the good news of the kingdom of God is the vocation of the Friars Minor, it is their mission. The Order of Friars Minor exists for its mission, it is a Fraternity-in-mission (cfr. LgP 42; FLC 59a). The mission for us Friars Minor is, before being anything we do, the reason for which we exist.

Being Friars Minor does not consist in living for ourselves, but for others. The Fraternities of the Order of Friars Minor are outward looking Fraternities, not groups closed in on self. Our cloister is the world and our mission is to make the Kingdom of God known (cfr. LgP 37). The Friars Minor carry out this mission through their life first of all and then through the testimony of their word.

## The Life Project

Communion of life in Fraternity is an essential element of our vocation. Since the time the Lord gave brothers to Francis (cfr. *2Test* 14), we cannot consider ourselves authentic Friars Minor without there being a relationship of real communion with the other Friars. Communion of Life in Fraternity is also our primary form of evangelisation.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the supreme manifestation of the communion of God with all men in Christ Jesus and, at the same time, the communion of all men with God in Christ. He constituted us in fraternity, incorporating us into His Body, and He taught us that in order to build it up it is necessary to deny ourselves by overcoming egoism and interests, making ourselves poor and minors (cfr. *Mk* 9,34-35)

This communion of men with Christ is not merely a human fact, the fruit of a common ideology or of common interest. Much less is it a virtue acquired solely through diligence, or a form of life justified by convenience. The communion of life of men is the work of God, a gift of God, a grace of God, a communion of life before being a communion of interests.

Such communion is also a vocation to which we have been called and, therefore, is a commitment to which each and every man must dedicate himself generously, without skimping any effort until it succeeds in being and manifests itself as a true Fraternity. Since “every Christian reality is built on human frailty” and “the perfect ‘ideal community’ does not exist yet” (*FLC*, 26), the effort to build fraternity necessarily passes through: the care of education, amiability, sincerity and mutual confidence, control of self, thoughtfulness, courtesy, sense of humour, spirit of sharing, pardon, reciprocal acceptance, capacity for dialogue and communication and the “sincere acceptance of a beneficial communitarian discipline” (*FLC* 27; cfr. *GGCC* 42).

The Friars should learn to live in communion with one another by leading a fraternal life in common, caring for and loving each other reciprocally, so that our form of life clearly expresses what our faith says. We are sons of the heavenly Father and brothers of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (cfr. GGCC 38).

The communion of life that the Friars live among themselves must be realised with all men loved by the Lord, especially with the needy, so that love may sustain them and solidarity assist them (cfr. Mt 25,31-46). It must also be realised with all creatures, having been called into existence by the love of God, are signs of His goodness and a manifestation of His beauty and are destined to be freed from the slavery of corruption in order to participate in the freedom of the children of God some day (cfr. Rm 8,19-21).

## Proposals

1. Each Province should elaborate its *Provincial Life Project*, each Fraternity its *Fraternity Life Project* and each Friar his *Personal Life Project*, taking into account the *Rule* and *Constitutions*, the Chapter document *May the Lord give you peace*, as well as the circumstances of time and place. The said Projects should be submitted to an evaluation each year.
2. The *Fraternity Life Project* should regulate the common life of the Friars, so that all have the same tenor of life and all can participate regularly in the activities of the Fraternity and collaborate in domestic work (cfr. GGCC 42 §2).
3. The *Fraternity Life Project*, in distributing responsibilities in the Fraternity, should pay attention to the equality of all the Friars, by virtue of their profession (cfr. GGCC 3 §1), and to the need of overcoming any type of ethnic or linguistic divisions.

## 4.

### Evangelisation-Mission

*A Fraternity that is nourished by the Gospel in order to offer the Word that is “spirit and life” to humanity, which is uneasy and in search of a meaning to life.*

When we are disposed to listen to “the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life” (2LtF 3) every day, we can travel the path of sanctity in Fraternity, announce the Gospel to all creatures, accompany present-day men in the search for the one God and discern the signs of the times in the Spirit of the Lord.

*“Jesus, came up and spoke to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time’ (Mt 28,18-20).*

4. The *Fraternity Life Project* and the *Personal Life Project* should provide suitable means to confront conflicts in an adequate way and, at the same time, should use them to build a true communion of life.
5. Account should be taken of the document *Fraternal Life in Community* and of the aid *You are all Brothers* in the animation of fraternal life.
6. The Ministers should use all means possible to put an end to the presence of Friars living alone.
7. The signs of the times demand that these be recognised, read and interpreted by each Friar and Fraternity (cfr. *LgP* 6). The *Fraternity Life Project* should indicate the suitable means to encourage such a task.
8. The *Provincial Life Project* and the *Fraternity Life Project* should pay particular attention to the care of sick and old Friars, as well as to the accompaniment of the “separated” Friars and of those Friars in difficulty.
9. Meetings between the Friars should be promoted in the Entities of the same Conference in order to increase awareness, communion and collaboration.
10. The Ministers should increase collaboration with the Franciscan Family, especially with the Poor Clares and other Franciscan Contemplative Sisters as well as with the SFO and Fra.Youth.

## Listening and Reflecting

### LISTENING

#### The Gospel

- *Mutual love*: 1Pt 1, 22-24; 3,8-12.
- *Love of neighbour*: Mt 22, 34-40; Mk 12,28-34; Lk 10,25-28; Rm 13,8-10; Gal 5,13-14; Jm 2,1-9; 1Jn 4,7-21.
- *Love of one's enemies*: Mt 5,43-48; Lk 6,27-35.
- *Service*: Mt 20,24-28; 23,8-12; Mk 9,33-37; 10,41-45; Gal 5,13-14.
- *Compassion of Jesus*: Mt 9,35-38; 14,13-14; 15,32-39; 20,29-34; Mk 1,40-45; 6,30-34; 8,1-10; 9,14-29; Lk 7,11-17; Hb 4,14-16.
- *Mercy and joy*: Lk 2,8-20; 5,29-32; 6,36-38; 7,11-17.36-49; 10,29-37; 15,1-32.
- *Pardon*: Mt 6,9-15; 18,21-35; Mk 11,25-26; Lk 6,36-38; 11, 1-4; 17,3-4; 23,33-34; Eph 4,30-32; Col 3,9-15.

#### St. Francis

- *Reciprocal love*: Rnb 5,13; Rb 6,7-9; 10,5; 1Test 3.
- *Pardon*: LtM 9-11.15.
- *Mercy*: Rnb 23,8; LOrd 50; PrGA 7; 1Cel 17; LegM 8,5; 3Comp 5,13.

#### Order

- *General Constitutions*, 38-63.
- *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, 17-21; 70-76.
- *You are all Brothers*, First part I/1-2, III/2; Second part.
- *The Order Today*, III, 1.
- *Orientations for the pastoral care of vocations*, pp. 61ff.
- *Report to the General Chapter 2003*, 71-88.

#### Church

- *Fraternal Life in Community*, 21-42; 54.
- *Vita Consecrata*, 41-53.

### REFLECTING

- What experience do we have of a lived poverty? What are we attached to? What do we possess? What possesses us?
- Are we really poor in order to be truly free?
- Have we at any time checked our experience of poverty by starting out from discernment of charity and humility?
- Up to what point does our disposition to change, to sincerely walk with Christ, go: to be His followers, to walk with the poor; to be their companion?
- What circumstances of life in our local Fraternity invite us to mutual dependence, to spiritual vigour and to hope against all hope?
- If God is "sufficient wealth", how do we live our relationship with material goods? Are we the poor of God and for God? What kind of poverty should we live?

## Listening and Reflecting

### LISTENING

#### The Gospel

- *The form of life of Jesus and His disciples*: Mt 6,25-34.
- *Money*: Mt 6,24.
- *Following (sequela)*:
- *Giving all*: Mt 4,18-22; 19,16-30; Mk 1,16-20; 10,17-31; Lk 5,1-11; 14,25-33; 18,18-30.
- *Denying oneself*: Mt 10,37-39; 16,24-28.
- *Becoming like children*: Mt 18,1-4; 19,13-15; Mk 10,13-16; Lk 18,15-17.

#### St. Francis

- *Poverty, humility, minority and charity*: Rnb 1,1-3; 2,14-17; 7,1-10.15-16; 8,1-12; 11,1-9; 14,1-6; Rb 1,1; 2,7-10.14.17; 4,1-3; 5,1-4; 6,1-9; 2Test 16-17.20-23; 1Test 1-5; LW.
- *Work*: Rnb 7,1-8; 2Test 24-26.

#### Order

- *General Constitutions*, 64-82; 96-98.
- *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*, 22-25: 77-83.
- *To Fill the Earth with the Gospel of Christ*, 149-164.
- *Instruments of Peace. An aid for the Friars Minor working in Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*, Rome 1999.
- *The Order Today*, pp. 35-37.
- *You are all Brothers*, Second part VII.
- *Report to the General Chapter 2003*, 89-108.

#### Church

- *Vita Consecrata*, 82.89-90.
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 50-51.
- *Starting afresh from Christ*, 36.

- *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 42-45.
- *Starting afresh from Christ*, 28-32.

### REFLECTING

- Are we convinced that it is the Lord that is creating the fraternity among us? How do we collaborate with Him in this vocation?
- What are our relationships with the Friars of the local and Provincial Fraternity like? How do we speak about them?
- What means do we use to overcome conflicts that arise in the local and provincial Fraternity?
- What means do we adopt to build a true fraternity and communion of life among Friars?
- What examples of pardon and reconciliation can we offer to the present-day world?
- What attitudes do we assume when we face up to the service of authority, corresponsibility and the mediations that are instituted to discover the Lord in our fraternal life?
- Are we convinced that God loves us? What should be the tenor of our life? Should we not help the Fraternity to have a trusting, audacious and courageous attitude towards the mission?
- How do we practise the duty of fraternal correction?

5. Each Province or Conference should commit itself to bringing out a new project that would correspond to the situation in which we live. “Islands of creativity” are spoken about today: having an island that would be contagious, animate others, in every Province or Conference.
6. The constitution of “inserted” and itinerant Fraternities should be encouraged, assuring suitable accompaniment to them.
7. Every Friar should feel himself itinerant and be disposed to abandon ideas, activities, offices and structures that do not correspond to our vocation and mission of Friars Minor.
8. Faithful to the condition of minors, the Friars should be bearers of peace, through their life rather than by word, in whatever place they may find themselves. They should encourage reconciliation between people and respect for creation, denouncing every kind of violence, injustice and deceit (cfr. *LgP* 12-13). The Friars should not spare any effort in being, through their lives, a sign of a new humanity that walks towards freedom and peace (cfr. *LgP* 35).
9. As servants of all, submissive to all, peaceful and humble of heart (cfr. *GGCC* 64), the Friars should avoid all kinds of fundamentalism (cfr. *LgP* 14) and, at the same time, they should be committed to encouraging reciprocal knowledge, mutual recognition and reciprocal acceptance (cfr. *LgP* 15).
10. The assessment of our life of poverty should be carried out in the light of what we promised at profession, to live “without anything of our own”, and in the light of the tenor of life of the people among whom we live.

to be poor among them, servants of all and submissive to all, peaceful and humble of heart. The love of Christ persuades us to be real minors and to live “with nothing of our own”.

As Friars Minor, we cannot be men on a journey with Jesus and the poor if we do not make the whole of our life into a journey towards God through our prayer life, if we do not walk with our Brothers of the Fraternity and if our daily choices do not put down roots in the authentic tradition of the Order and in Franciscan spirituality (cfr. *LgP* 36abc).

### Proposals

1. The *Provincial Life Project*, the *Fraternity Life Project* and the *Personal Life Project* should establish, keeping circumstances and places in mind, the practical forms with which the Friars must live the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which we are all called, gospel minority, which by the grace of God we have professed, and solidarity with the poor in conformity with our *forma vitae*.
2. The *Provincial Life Project* and the *Fraternity Life Project* should establish the quantity of money by which the Province and the local Fraternities will show their solidarity with the most needy and they should make the necessary decisions to have the empty spaces of our Houses put at the disposal of the needs of the people, taking into account due legal precautions.
3. The Ministers should take supreme care in assuring that the use of financial funds of their Entities always respects ethical values and be to the benefit of the poorest.
4. The Entities should continue the review of their structures so that they may be at the service of life. This life should never be sacrificed to safeguard structures and these, at the same time, should bring us as near as possible to the life conditions of the poorest.

## 3.

### Minority, poverty and solidarity

*A Fraternity of minors, poor and in solidarity, pilgrim and stranger; walking the streets of the world in the footprints of Jesus in order to proclaim the value of every man and every creature*

The capacity to give witness to the value of each person and of each creature that are loved by the Father, redeemed by the Son and inhabited by the Holy Spirit, is born from the radical commitment to live the spirit of minority, of expropriation for the purpose of sharing and of itinerancy in the footprints of Jesus and of His poor Mother.

*“He said to them: Take nothing for the journey, neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money and let none of you take a spare tunic” (Lk 9, 3).*

## The Life Project

The communion of life in fraternity and the mission of the Friars is characterised and made specific through minority, poverty and solidarity. These are derived from the need to restore to the Lord all goods and they lead to availability and a freedom proper to those that opt for a life inspired by the word and example of the Lord. But minority, poverty and solidarity cannot live without their sisters humility and charity and, at the same time, these cannot subsist if they are not protected by holy poverty.

On the other hand, it is only by looking at ourselves in the mirror that is Christ and constantly observing our face in it (cfr. *4LAg* 15) that we will be able to clothe ourselves with the blessed poverty, holy humility and ineffable charity that shine forth in Christ.

When we consider in Christ the mystery of His birth, we admire the humility of it and are moved by such great poverty (cfr. *4LAg* 19-21).

When we consider the mystery of His life, we observe in it the humility of Him who serves, the blessed poverty of Him who is offered fully to others, the love of Him who accepts limitless suffering and weariness for the redemption of all (cfr. *4LAg* 22).

When we contemplate in Christ the mystery of His death, we see the light of ineffable charity shine forth in the admirable humility and naked poverty of our God and Lord (cfr. *4LAg* 23).

We contemplate Christ our only Lord, we love Him and listen to His Word in the measure that we listen to, love and are in solidarity with the poor. The love of Christ spurs us to go out to meet the poor, to walk with them without staff, haversack, bread, money or spare tunic (cfr. *LgP* 33). The love of Christ leads us to the “lepers” of our times, to the poor, and calls us