

## **The Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia: Call for Unity in Diversity, Collaboration in the Spirit of Synodality, and Interfaith Dialogue.**

The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli OFM, accompanied by the Definitor General for Asia and Oceania, Br. John Wong OFM, and the representative of Development Office, Br. Baptist D'souza OFM visit all the Friars in Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia and Foundation of St. António de Lisboa Timor Leste on August 4-15, 2024.

### **Welcoming and Fraternal Liturgical Ceremony**

On Sunday, 4 August 2024, they were welcomed by the Friars in the Province of St. Michael the Archangel of Indonesia in Jakarta. Br. Mikael Peruhe OFM as the Provincial Minister with his definitories and all Indonesian friars greeted them with cultural ceremony from Ngada-Bajawa, Flores, namely *Sa Ngaza* (welcoming speech) and the *Ja'i* dance (welcoming dance). They were also presented with traditional *Ulos* cloth from North Sumatra in the Provincial House.

The Friars attended the ceremony also join a fraternal liturgical ceremony during which they listened to the readings from Our Rule Chapter X:1-6 and General Constitution VI:199.

Br. Mikael, expressed the Province's joy of the visit of the Minister General. He highlighted the diversity of Indonesia and widespread presence of friars across the archipelago. The Minister General's itinerary includes Jakarta, Timor Leste, and Flores Island.

In response, Br. Massimo appreciated joyfully the wonderful welcome ceremony and emphasized how beautiful is our Franciscan fraternity in the context of the diversity of Indonesia's languages, cultures, and ethnicities. To conclude, he said: we are all brothers in Christ and in St. Francis of Assisi.

To mark his visit, Br. Massimo handed over the indulgence of Portiunculla and the text of Cantic of the Creatures upon Br. Mikael on behalf of the all friars in the Indonesian Province. Our fraternal joy was then materialized in a fraternal lunch. After the lunch, Br. Massimo was willing to join the dancing with all the friars before departing to the Timor Leste via Bali.

### **Collaboration in the spirit of synodality: visit the Friars in the Foundation of St. António de Lisboa Timor Leste**

A visit to the Friars in the Indonesian Province commenced with a visit to the Friars at the Foundation of St. António de Lisboa Timor-Leste, from August 5-8, 2024. In Timor-Leste, Br. Massimo, together with Br. John and Br. Baptist, met with the extended Franciscan Family of Timor-Leste (Fratiles). During this meeting, Br. Massimo emphasized the importance of unity among Franciscans and collaboration with the local Church in the spirit of synodality.

Throughout the visit, they also met with the Archbishop of Dili, Mgr. Virgílio do Carmo da Silva, SDB, various groups, including young people, parish priest, and all of the Solemn Professed Friars. A key highlight was a meeting with Solemn Professed Friars, Br. Massimo outlined priorities for the Order, including the need for ongoing formation and a focus on the mission *ad gentes*. Beside that, they also

visited the Friars ecopastoral community, the Franciscan school, hostel; the currently combined Postulancy and Novitiate house in Fatucahi, Timor Leste.

### **Friars in Flores: Encouraged to Cultivate Contemplative Life**

Following their visit to Timor-Leste, they continued their visit to Flores Island from August 8 to 12, 2024. Upon arrival in Labuan Bajo, they were warmly welcomed with traditional customs by the the Friars and dignitaries, including met Emeritus Bishop of Bogor Diocese, Mgr. Michael Cosmas Angkur OFM.

The Friars then proceeded to Pagal, where they were greeted with a traditional '*tuak curu*' ceremony and Ronda and Ja'i dances. A fraternal liturgical ceremony followed at the Church of Christ the King, Pagal Parish.

A highlight of the visit was a dialogue with the youth. Br. Massimo expressed his admiration for their enthusiasm and encouraged them to emulate St. Francis by pursuing their dreams with passion and purpose. He emphasized the importance of placing Jesus at the center of their lives and serving their fellow human beings, especially the marginalized.

Br. Massimo and Br. John also met with postulants, offering guidance and support as they embarked on their Franciscan journey. In a gathering with the Solemn Professed Friars, Br. Massimo stressed the significance of cultivating a contemplative life to deepen one's connection with God and better serve the community. He expressed concern over the declining number of lay brothers and underscored the importance of the fraternal identity of Friars.

Interactions with Franciscan Families and Parish Councils from the Dioceses of Ruteng and the Archdioceses of Ende further enriched the visit. The visit concluded with a Eucharistic celebration on August 11, 2024, led by Br. John Wong. In his homily, Br. Massimo drew inspiration from Jesus as the bread of life, emphasizing His role as a source of strength, joy, and sustenance.

### **Friars in Jakarta: A Call for Unity in Diversity, Contemplation, and Interfaith Dialogue**

After they visit the Friars in Flores Island, they continued their visit to the Friars in Jakarta from August 12 to 15, 2024. One of the things they did during their visit to Jakarta, they met with the all of Solemn Professed Friars. At this meeting, the Minister Province of the Province of the St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, Br. Mikael Peruhe OFM, provided an overview of the life of the Friars, such as the numbers of members, policies, chapters, strengths, challenges, and the province's focus. In addition, Br. Antonius Eddy Kristiyanto OFM presented a historical overview of the presence of the Friars Minor in Indonesia. He also noted in his presentation that "we are considering our minority in the real sense." In response to that, Br. Massimo emphasized the importance of unity amidst diversity, the integration of faith and life, and the ongoing journey of spiritual growth for the Friars.

They also met with Mgr. Paskalis Bruno Syukur OFM (Bishop of Bogor Diocese) and Mgr. Adrianus Sunarko OFM (Bishop of Pangkalpinang Diocese). Another opportunity was for them to meet and dialogue with the Definitories, the Guardians and formators, the novices, and the young Friars in Jakarta, and also visiting the Philosophy College of Driyarkara Jakarta, the JPIC Indonesia office, and the St. Antonius Padua shelter, where the Friars accommodate, serve, and care for the sick and the marginalized.

Another activity undertaken was an Interfaith Dialogue with the theme "Humanity and Ecology" at the Hindu's Temple of Adhitya Jaya, Rawamangun-East Jakarta on August 14, 2024. Present at this interfaith dialogue were Matias Filemon Hadiputro (a priest from the Javanese Christian Church), Nissa Wargadipura (a Muslim woman and the head of the Ath-Thaariq Ecological Pesantren); Budhy Munawar-Rachman (a moderate Muslim figure), Atthadhiro Thera (from the Buddhist religious organization Sangha Theravāda Indonesia); JM I Wayan Gelgel (a representative of the Hindu organization Pinandita Sanggraha Nusantara); Budi S. Tanuwibowo (Chairman of the Indonesian Confucian High Council); and Nasrin Astani (an activist for interfaith dialogue of the Baha'i faith).

In his presentation, Br. Massimo emphasized the spirit of promoting interfaith dialogue in order to respond to the current ecological crisis. Specifically, he highlighted the spirit of Pope Francis who has a special concern for the current ecological crisis and it should be the concern of all humanity. In addition, he also appreciated the spirit of unity and diversity that is well-established in Indonesia. In this dialogue, Br. Massimo and the religious leaders made a joint declaration was issued, outlining commitments to brotherhood, human dignity, justice, peace, and environmental stewardship.

As it happened in Timor Leste and Flores, so too in Jakarta. They also met and had a dialogue with the Franciscan Families (KANESTA from Jakarta and GEFRABO from Bogor) and the members of the Parish Council served by the Friars in the Archdiocese of Jakarta and the Diocese of Bogor, culminating in a Eucharistic Celebration. In his homily, Br. Massimo said that "Mary Assumpt into heaven is the image of the future God intends for us. The risen Lord extends the glory of his risen body to her who extended to him her own body. In this eucharist Christ wishes to receive from us the gift of our own bodies as a spiritual sacrifice (Rom 12:1), even as he extends to us the glory of his risen body."

The entire visitation in Indonesia concluded with the Solemn Profession Eucharist (August 15, 2024) for six young Friars who made their religious vows in the hands of Br. Massimo. The Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by Br. John and concelebrated by other priests, was attended by the all Friars (from several guardianates in Jakarta, Bogor, Sumatra, and Kalimantan), the parents of the solemn professed Friars, the Franciscan families, religious, and the mankind.

Quoting the Earlier Rule XXII, Br. Massimo in his homily, he said that "every life is a gift. Our Franciscan life is a gift. Our vows are a gift. A gift by itself is never forced, never selfish, never calculating. This gift is also a somewhat special. You don't give something. You give yourself. You give your life. And this is truly Franciscan view... Religious vows, and our Franciscan vows are indeed *a bond of faithfulness and ties of love.*" He added that, "only by having faith we can be faithful. Only from the perspective of faith we can say and promise: *I will live these vows until the day I die... with all my heart I give myself to this brotherhood.*"\*\*\*