Dear Brothers,

May the joy and peace of our Risen Lord be with you!

Our Father Francis composed a psalm for his Office of the Passion which he recited every day during this Easter season: “Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wondrous deeds.

This Easter falls during a special jubilee year of mercy. The Prophet’s call to “remember not the events of the past” demands that we forgive and set aside old hurts and injuries. All too often we can keep our own brothers imprisoned in the past. Something they did or said which may have offended us years ago continues to define our relationship with them. If we are to move into God’s future, and become the type of brotherhood called for in our world today, we must leave these hurts behind. The Risen Jesus empowers us to forgive. (Cf. John 20: 22-23) Let us heed the voice of St. Francis: “There should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, who after he has looked into your eyes, would go away without having received your mercy.” (Letter to a Minister, 9)

Yes, brothers, as Pope Francis urges us: “it is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that awakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.” (Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus, 10)

As Franciscans, the jubilee year of mercy is summoning us to transcend the divisions in our brotherhood that have arisen over our long history. Next year, 1517, marks the 500th anniversary of the so-called Bull of Union, Ite Vos, which separated the Lesser Brothers into different congregations. The General Chapter last year committed us to work together with our Conventual and Capuchin brothers …

[For full text, see: www.ofm.org]

On April 20th, 2016, the Pontifical University, Antonianum, and the Sapienza University of Rome signed an important cultural and scientific cooperation agreement. Using approaches such as the interchange of professors and researchers, this will bring about joint research projects, courses, study days, and seminars on issues related to the following areas: Classical studies, Archeology and Franciscan Art; Science and Faith; Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

The Rector of the Sapienza University, Prof. Eugenio Gaudio, said, “The Sapienza has given special attention to a collaborative relationship with the Pontifical University, Antonianum, which is an important research contributor in the areas of philosophy, linguistics and theology.”

“Within the overall policy of agreements with which our University intends to strengthen its strategy of internationalization,” added Prof. Mary Melone, Rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, “the agreement with the Sapienza is a particularly important milestone. I am sure that collaboration in scientific research related to areas central to our university has the potential to be of great educational importance.”

[Download the full text of the Press Release here.]
OTHER NEWS

The San Damiano crucifix returns to San Damiano

Assisi-The San Damiano Fraternity, having obtained approval from the Poor Clare sisters of the Proto-Monastery of St. Clare in Assisi, as well as from the Heritage Authorities in Perugia, has announced that from June 15th to 19th the San Damiano Crucifix will return to San Damiano. This extraordinary event is part of the fraternity’s celebration of the Jubilee of Mercy.

Full details will be published as soon as they are available.

PUA - the new biography of St Francis

Rome – On April 21st, 2016 the Pontifical University Antonianum held a seminar to mark the publication of Vita beati patris nostri Francisci, the biography written by Thomas of Celano, recently discovered by Jacques Dalarun.

The speakers were: Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (The Critical Edition); Felice Acrocca (The place of Vita beati patris nostri Francisci in the sources); Filippo Sedda (Vita brevior or breviatio liturgica?); Marco Guida (From Vita beati Francisci to the rediscovered Life: a synoptic reading).

The seminar concluded with a general discussion on the issues raised.

CIME Meeting

Rome – The meeting of the International Council for Missions and Evangelization (CIME) began on April 18th, 2016, taking place at the OFM General Curia. Br. Luis Gallardo welcomed the participants, who were then introduced by Br. Russel Murray.

The meeting met until April 22nd, during which time the friars discussed the various ministries and missions of the Order, planned for the future, and revised the CIME statutes.

International JPIC Course

The International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation course began on Tuesday April 5th, and this year the motto was: Humanity and care for our common home. The course is organized by the JPIC Office of the General Curia in conjunction with the JPIC Chair at the PUA Faculty of Theology. This year, the central theme of the course is JPIC values in the light of Pope Francisco’s Encyclical Laudato sì.

The course has been held for the last ten years at the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome.

The “Prayer and Devotion” Commission

Rome - From March 30th to April 6th last, Brs Julio Bunader (General Vicar), Gerardo Evans (Central America), Emilio Rocha Grande (Spain) and Diego Dalla Gassa (Holy Land), the members of the “Prayer and Devotion” Commission, met at the General Curia and at the Hermitage of La Verna and were also joined by two external advisers, Brs Andre Cirino (USA) and Eugenio Barelli (Italy). The meeting was held in order to provide resources to the General Definitory in order to respond to the decision of the 2015 General Chapter: By means of the publication of Guidelines and an indication of concrete steps to be followed, the General Definitory is to encourage each Entity, or at least each Conference, to set up a fraternity as a hermitage or a house of prayer particularly devoted to the life of prayer and devotion. (cf. Mandate 7).

The English-Speaking Conference (ESC) meeting in Texas

Galveston, Texas, April 4th-8th, 2016 - The Provincial Ministers and Custodes of the English Speaking Conference held their annual Spring meeting at St. Patrick’s Church, Holy Family Parish, a ministry of St. John the Baptist Province.

During the meeting, the Provincial Ministers and Custodes of the United States, Canada, and Europe each met separately in sub-Conference to discuss matters relevant to their regions.

Meeting of the Cono Sur (Southern Cone) Provinces

The three southernmost OFM Provinces of Latin America (two in Argentina and one in Chile) make up the “Cono Sur” Conference. The Definitories and Formation Councils from each of the Provinces met from April 4th to 8th, 2016, in San Rafael (Argentina) in order to work on their decision to set up an interprovincial novitiate. The meeting was also attended by friars who will be part of the planned novitiate fraternity, in addition to the General Secretary for Formation and Studies, Br Cesare Vaiani, who shared his insights on the challenges of Formation today, and on the importance of Provinces working together.
Br. Rubén Tierrablanca, OFM, Nominated Vicar Apostolic in Istanbul

16th April 2016 – The Holy Father has appointed Br. Rubén Tierrablanca Gonzalez, O.F.M., as apostolic vicar of Istanbul, Turkey, and apostolic administrator of the exarchate for faithful of Byzantine rite, with the titular seat of Tunbruca. Up to now he has been the Vicar Delegate of the Apostolic Vicariate. The bishop-elect was born in Cortázar, Mexico in 1952, made his religious vows in 1977, and was ordained a priest in 1985.

In 1992 he was named Rector of Students of the Pontifical University Antonianum and afterwards Guardian of the General Curia in Rome (1997-2003). Since 2003 he has been Guardian of the OFM friary in Istanbul, the International Fraternity for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey, and Pastor of the Santa Maria Draperis parish in Istanbul. He has been Vicar Delegate of the Apostolic Vicariate of Istanbul since 2014.

Apart from Spanish, he speaks Italian, English, French, and Portuguese as well as having a knowledge of Turkish, German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside, California is offering the following sessions:

* Saint Francis and His Love of Creatures July 11-15: Dr. William Short, OFM
* Theology of Creation in Bonaventure July 18-22: Dr. Thomas Herbst, OFM
* Enduring Presence: The Integral Ecology of Franciscan Life July 25-29: Dr. Darleen Pryds and Donna Foley, OFS

For more details visit their Continuing Education program.

The School of Franciscan Studies in St. Bonaventure, New York is offering the following courses:

* Survey of Franciscan History July 11-29: Dominic Monti, OFM
* Francis: His Life and Charism July 4-15 Joshua Benson, PhD
* Formation Roundtable July 11, 14, 19 & 21: Lake Herman, OFM Cap.
* Clare and Franciscan Women July 11-29: Jean Francois Godet-Caloger, PhD,
* St. Bonaventure on Truth, Beauty and Goodness July 4-22: Anthony Murphy, PhD
* Women and Gender in Islam: From Revelation to Revolution July 4-15: Michael Calabria, OFM, Ph.D.
* Development of the Franciscan Person July 11-29: David Couturier, OFM Cap.
* Anti-Catholic Bias in America — Yesterday and Today: A Franciscan Perspective July 4-15: Kyle Haden, OFM

For more information on these conferences: Click here

Santa Maria Draperis has an unusual Holy Week

Br. Eleuthère Baharanyi Makuta, Guardian of S. Maria Draperis in Istanbul, Turkey, has had to organize an unusual Holy Week for the fraternity.

On Palm Sunday evening a bomb exploded five hundred metres from the friary and left five dead, with several others wounded. As might be expected, this tragic event created a climate of fear which affected those who might wish to participate in the ceremonies.

The friars adapted to this extraordinary situation and worked with a small group to have an evening of prayer on Tuesday of Holy Week. Then on Holy Thursday they had lunch with Syrian refugee children, and evening Mass of the Lord's Supper with the Dominican friars. On Good Friday they joined the Anglican Community to hear the Passion Readings being proclaimed, and celebrated Holy Saturday with a little congregation. On Easter Monday they went to the Armenian Patriarchate to exchange Easter wishes.

By means of a thorough examination, this volume underscores the central points in the ‘Letter to a Minister’, dividing it into three sections. This leads the Franciscan author to assert that, for St. Francis, Mercy as the face of Christ is the fundamental criterion in the governance of a Province or the Order. Finally, in St. Francis, as well as in the Gospel, Mercy presupposes Justice.


This work is made up of sections of the doctoral thesis recently successfully defended at the PUA Theology Faculty by Br. Théodore, receptionist at the General Curia. (Included are: the General Index, Chapters 2 & 3, the Conclusion and Bibliography). The author, by an analysis of contemporary writers, shows how Christ is indeed “Salvator Hominis”, the unique and universal Saviour of all of humanity.

COMMISSIONE SCOTISTICÆ CURA ET STUDIO, B. Ioannis Duns Scoti, XV.1, Indici, Typici Vaticani, Civitates Vaticana 2016, 546 pages.

With this volume, the “Scotus Commission” has begun the publication of the indices of all the volumes of its work so far published.

This volume (XV.1) contains indices of name days, bibliographies, and primary and secondary sources, in addition to a full list of the loci paralleli in the Ordinatio and the Lectura, and an updated concordance for the Vatican and Wadding-Vivés editions.

The Introduction, of about about forty pages, is in Italian and English – an major innovation.

NEW MINISTER PROVINCIAL
BR. JOÃO AMILTON DOS SANTOS, OFM Provincias of St. Anthony of Padua, Brazil

NEW CUSTOS
BR. GIANNI GATTEI, OFM Custody of St. Francis of Assisi, Papua New Guinea

NEW VISITATORS GENERAL
BR. DANIEL DWYER, OFM Holy Name Province, USA for the Province of Ireland
BR. GREG FRIEDMAN, OFM Province of St. John the Baptist, USA for the Custody of St. John the Baptist, Pakistan
BR. LUÍS FERNANDO LAPIÈRRE Province of the Assumption of the BVM, Argentina for the Province of Sts. Francis and James, Mexico
BR. PHILIP FORKER, OFM (Assistant General Delegate) Province of Ireland for the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India
BR. ANDREW BROPHY, OFM Province of the Assumption of the BVM, USA for the Province of the Holy Spirit, Australia and New Zealand