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2014
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JANUARY
7-11: Rome, General Curia: meeting of the new Ministers Provincial, Custodes and Provincial Secretaries
13-18: Santa Severa: personal spiritual exercises
20-23: Camposampiero (PD): participated in a formation week of the Province of St. Anthony (Italy)

FEBRUARY
-8: India: visited the Province and sites that will be opening soon
12-14: Mottental (Switzerland): visited the sisters
17-28: Rome, General Curia: meeting of the General Definitory

MARCH
Feb. 28-Mar. 1: Costa Rica: Participated in the episcopal ordination of Friar Enrique Montero
9-13: Croatia: Ordinary Provincial Chapter
Session February 17-27, 2014

In the session held at the Friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome, the General Definitory:

- approved the minutes of the meeting held December 2-12, 2013;
- confirmed the date and decided on the program of spiritual exercises for the General Definitory;
- was updated on some contacts with the General Custody of Assisi,
- was informed about the fraternal visit of Friar Jaroslav WYSOCZAŃSKI to the friars of the Provinces of the Czech Republic and Hungary;
- deepened reflection on the modus operandi of the International Commissions of the Order and their rapport with their respective Secretaries and General Delegates;
- evaluated the January 2014 meeting organized in the General Curia for new Ministers Provincial, Custodes and Provincial Secretaries;
- defined the program and agenda of the June 2014 meeting with the Presidents of the Conferences and Federations;
- affirmed the Custodial Statutes of the Provincial Custody of Great Britain and Ireland, in accordance with the law of the Order;
- approved the request to change the name of the friary in Ellicott City, USA, from St. Anthony to Portiuncula Friary, effective May 5, 2014;
- evaluated and accepted the request of the “Union of OFM Conventual Ministers Provincial of Italy” to transfer ownership of the magazine “Franciscan Missionary” from the entity “Curia Generalizia OFM Conv.” to the Union.
- accepted the request of the Province of Malta and entrusted to it the responsibility for a new mission in northern India in collaboration with the Province India;
- agreed on the contents of a letter to be sent to all the Provinces that have friars and communities in the territory of the current five Provinces of Central Italy which will unite into a single Province in 2017;
- met with the leaders of the lay movement: “Community of Sant’Egidio”;
- started a discussion about the allocation of the Fund for the Needs of the Order for 2014;
- reflected how to promote economic solidarity in the Order starting from the motions passed by the 2013 General Chapter;
- reflected on how to raise the necessary capital for the funding of ‘scholarships’ for student friars in Rome;
- took note of the finances of the General Houses in 2013 and began reflection on their budgets for 2014;
- took note of the requests of some Provinces to pay the taxatio curiae following the procedures in force prior to the General Chapter of 2013;
- discussed and approved a proposal for studying the subdivision of the AFCOF Federation into zones;
- listened to reports on a series of fraternal visits made by various Assistant Generals to a number of jurisdictions:
  - from the Assistant General for the AFCOF, Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI, on the occasion of his recent visit to the Province of Zambia and to the Custody of Kenya (January-February, 2014);
from the Assistant General for the CEC, Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, on the occasion of
his visit to the Province of Slovenia for the meeting of the guardians (January 27-29, 2014, in Olimje, Slovenia);
his visit to the Province of Croatia for the meeting of the guardians (January 30-31, 2014, in Zagreb, Croatia);
his visit to the Sisters of the Convent of St. Joseph in Muotathal, and to the friary in Fribourg, Switzerland, made together with the Minister General (February 12-14, 2014);
from the Assistant General for the CEO, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI, on the occasion of
his visit to the mission in Kazakhstan made together with the Vicar General (December 16-21, 2013);
his meeting with Definitory members from the Province of the Czech Republic and later, the Province of Hungary and Transylvania (February 7-11, 2014);
from the Assistant General for the CIMP, Friar Joaquín AGESTA, on the occasion of
the meeting of the guardians of the Provinces of Southern Italy (13-16 January in Baia Domizia, Calabria Region, Italy);
the meeting of the Ministers Provincial of the five Central Italian Provinces that will be uniting in 2017 (January 20-21, 2014, Friary of San Giacomo, Rome, Italy);
his fraternal visit to the Provincial Custody of the Orient and the Holy Land (January 23-February 3, 2014);
his fraternal visit to the postulancy program in Osimo (February 6-9, 2014);
from the Assistant General for the FALC, Friar Jorge FERNÁNDEZ, on the occasion of
his visit to the Brazilian Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception on the occasion of its Custodial Chapter (October 7-11, and then, December 2-6, 2013);
his visit to the Brazilian Province of St. Francis on the occasion of its Ordinary Provincial Chapter (October 14-18, 2013);
the Ordinary Provincial Chapter of the Province del Mexico (October 21-25, and then, November 25-28 2013);
his visit to the Provincial Custody of Colombia on the occasion of its Ordinary Custodial Chapter (November 4-8, and then, November 18-21 2013);
his visit to the Provincial Custody of Bolivia on the occasion of its Ordinary Custodial Chapter (November 11-15, and then December 9-13, 2013);
the General Assembly of the Federation (January 13-19 in Tepojaco, Mexico);
from the Assistant General for the FAMC, Friar Benedict BAEK, on the occasion of
of the second part of the Chapter of the Provincial Custody of the Philippines (January 20-25, 2014);
his visit to the Province of India, in particular, to the new mission at Barasat, near Calcutta, and to the mission in Sri Lanka, made with the Minister General (January 27-February 6);
his visit to the Province of Korea (February 11, 2014);
agreed upon a response to a letter from the Minister Provincial of the Netherlands;
was updated on the meeting of February 15, 2014, of all the friars serving in the general offices.
met with the coordinator of the Chinese friars, Friar Paolo LIU, and was updated on the mission in China;
took a look at some expectations on the part of the person responsible for organizing the International Meeting of Youth Toward Assisi, Friar Simone TENUTI;
examined various personal cases.
Epiphany 2014 at the Seraphicum

Friar Felice Fiasconaro / red. rb / trad. mf

The Solemnity of the Epiphany saw the return of all the friars who were out on mission, during the Christmas season, for pastoral service, family, or a few days of rest.

Everybody was already back when the guardian, Friar Felice Fiasconaro, began blessing the house at 5 p.m. Blessing all the residence floors of the friars is really a beautiful tradition on Epiphany. And it’s done in solemn form: praying for each floor, incensing and sprinkling each room and its occupant, while everyone accompanies the ritual with chants recalling the Christmas spirit. The blessing of the student residence floors was handled by the Rector, Friar Sorin Giurgi.

At 7:15 p.m., there was another beautiful custom: the extraction of patron saints. This time it was attended not only by the friars of the community, but also a large delegation of confreres from the General Houses in Rome including a number of the General Assistants, plus the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca, and the Vicar of the Order, Friar Jerzy Norel. Friar Marco presided over solemn Vespers.

At the end, each friar went in procession to the foot of the altar to kiss the statue of the Baby Jesus and take a prayer card from a basket. On the back was written the name of that friar’s patron saint for the year along with the name of another friar for whom he was invited to pray.

Even the dinner had a solemn tone reserved for special occasions. Finally there came another custom; the game of bingo and one can’t forget that January 6 is also the day of the Befana (a mythical old woman who brings presents on Epiphany). A Befana was really there, too, not just for the lucky ones who got presents, but also because someone dressed the part and went around the tables.

On January 7, it was back to lectures and life as usual.
The Newly-Elected at the General Curia

From January 7-11, 2014, at the Friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome, the General Curia held its traditional meeting with newly-elected Ministers Provincial, Custodes and Provincial Secretaries. All had been elected within the last year.

Of the Superiors present, the Ministers Provincial were: Friar Giovanni VOLTAN (IT-St. Anthony), Friar Giambattista SPOTO (IT-Sicily), Friar Roberto BERNINI (IT-Tuscany), Friar Ángel Mariano GUZMÁN (Spain), Friar Fabrizio DE LELLIS (IT-Abruzzo), and Friar Francisco DÍAZ VALDEZ (Mexico).

The Provincial Custodes were: Friar Jhon Jairo MOLINA CASTAÑEDA (Colombia), Friar Ronald Ramiro ARMIJO ZELADA (Bolivia), and Friar Víctor Dimaangay MATEO (Philippines);

The Provincial Secretaries were: Friar Massimo Antonio RUGGIERO (IT-Apulia), Friar Salvatore CORSARO (IT-Sicily), Friar Quarto PALADINI (IT-The Marches), Friar Umberto FANFARILLO (IT-Rome), Friar Marino LUCCHESI (IT-Tuscany), Friar Luca BASELICE (IT-Naples), Friar Daniel-Catalin ROMILA (Romania), Friar Alejandro VÁZQUEZ PALACIOS (Mexico), Friar Piotr ŻURKIEWICZ (PL-Warsaw), Friar Luis ESTEBAN LARRA (Spain).

The 19 participants were able to meet with the Minister General and his Definitory, and with the heads of the various General Offices.

For years, the program has been used to facilitate the exchange of useful information for serving our friars, to foster mutual understanding between staff of the General Curia and the ministers, to have a shared formation experience with particular attention paid to the liturgy, and to go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican.

In the final evaluation, the participants appreciated the program, the personal and community meetings, the liturgies and the Petrine pilgrimage. They noted the fraternal welcome they received from the communities of the Curia and the Friary of St. Maximilian Kolbe where some of the participants were housed. We are pleased to conclude with something written by one of the Ministers Provincial: “I found a General Curia with a warm heart, with a nice atmosphere. It did me lots of good. With gratitude…”
Friar Dinh Anh Nguyen Nhue, Vice Dean of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure (Seraphicum) of the Friars Minor Conventual, is among the winners of the “Carlo Maria Martini International Award” for its Bible and Culture division.

The award is sponsored by the Foundation of the same name which was established by the Society of Jesus of Milan with the participation of the Cardinal’s family and presided over by Father Charles Casalone, the Provincial of the Italian Jesuits.

The young Vice Dean of St. Bonaventure received this important award on February 15 in Milan. Friar Nguyen is of Vietnamese nationality. He is a professor of exegesis and biblical theology at the Seraphicum, the Gregorian University and at the Catholic Theological College/MCD University of Divinity in Melbourne, Australia.

In addition to being a religious in the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, Friar Nguyen is also an electrical engineer. He is emblematic of the intercultural character of the Faculty and its commitment to research and study. Reaching this level of international recognition is a nice end in itself, but it’s also a starting point for many other important projects.

The winning work, entitled, “The Bible and Asian Cultures: Reading the Word of God in Its Cultural Background and in the Vietnamese Context”, was conducted by Friar Nguyen with two of his former students, Tran Thi Ly and J.B. Pham Quy Trong, both Vietnamese.

The work examines the biblical proverbs of Viet Nam, the image of Jesus the Son of God in the New Testament and in Vietnamese tradition, and finally, the language of love in the Song of Songs and in Vietnamese literature.

As stated in the rules, the work should be an unpublished study that opens up new horizons and future research. However, the Award Jury, in explaining its reasoning, pointed out that: “Three young Vietnamese scholars have been able to give, through their work, a stimulus for the development of further research on the relationship between the Bible and Asian culture.”

The award ceremony took place on the same day as Cardinal Martini’s birthday, February 15. It was held in the conference room of the administration building of the Archdiocese of Milan, in the presence of the Archbishop, Cardinal Angelo Scola.

The Dean, Friar Dominic Paoletti, expressed great satisfaction: “This recognition of our confere Friar Dinh Anh Nguyen Nhue is not only good news for our teacher and his serene and serious commitment to combine the Word of God and the word of man, but it is also good news for the academic community at the Seraphicum which is dedicated to explore the category of relationality as a theological and anthropological foundation of inculturation, made fruitful only through intercultural dialogue.”

Friar Nguyen is a member of the Province of the Immaculate Conception B.V.M. in Poland.
Visit to Switzerland

On February 12-14, 2014, the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca, the Procurator General, Friar Maurizio Di Paolo, the Vicar General of the Curia community, Maximilien Sauge, and the Assistant General of the CEC (Conferentia Europae Centralis), Friar Miljenko Hontić, paid a visit to the convent of the Conventual Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph in Muotathal (Minoritinen).

They paid visit also to the friars of the community of Freiburg (Custody of Austria-Switzerland).

The visit took place following the placement of the convent of the Sisters of Muotathal under the jurisdiction of our Order. On this occasion, the Minister General confirmed the Mother Superior, Sister Scholastica Opplinger, for another three years in office, as well as her Vicar, Sister Maria Luisa.

The meeting was also attended by the Vicar of the Custody of Austria-Switzerland, Friar Daniele Brocca, who for some time now has been appointed the Delegate of the Minister General for the sisters.

On their way back, the Minister General and his confreres visited the friars and the convent of Fribourg. The guardian of the community, Friar Pascal Marquard, showed the Minister General the current restoration of the convent, which is ongoing. The work started about a year ago.
Frescobaldi, Michelangelo and the Friars Minor Conventual

The third edition of the “Frescobaldi International Festival of Music” is scheduled for February 26 through March 2, 2014, at the Basilica of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome.

It will offer performances by international artists, as well as a surprising and original interpretation of the relationship between the Order of Friars Minor Conventual and Michelangelo Buonarroti. This year marks 450th anniversary of his death.

This musical event, eagerly awaited by fans of the organ and harpsichord, is organized to commemorate Girolamo Frescobaldi, the famous liturgical organist of St. Peter’s Basilica. He was of the greatest musical geniuses of his day and is buried within the Basilica of the Twelve Holy Apostles. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re will open the Festival on Wednesday, February 26 at 8:00 p.m., laying a floral tribute on the grave of the famous musician and lighting a lamp fueled with oil donated by Italian organists and harpsichordists.

The Festival, which will showcase performances by the greatest interpreters of Frescobaldi, will highlight a particular trait d’union between the famous liturgical organist and the Florentine artist – who spent decades in Rome. The two didn’t know each other, in as much as Michelangelo died in 1564, nineteen years before the birth of Frescobaldi. But they are both closely tied to the Basilica of the Twelve Holy Apostles where Friars Minor Conventual were providing pastoral service then – just as they are now.

While the relationship with the musician from Ferrara is well known, the link with the Florentine artist had not been fully realized until now. Friar Isidoro Gatti, a religious in the Order of Friars Minor Conventual has given it much thought. After fresh research and reorganizing the studies produced thus far, he has created a publication with the explanatory title “Michelangelo Buonarroti: Parishioner of 12 Holy Apostles in Rome”. It will be presented within the setting of the Festival on Saturday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m., in the Basilica. Historian Fr. Luigi Mezzadri, rector of San Silvestro al Quirinale will also be at hand.

The publication is slender but rich in historical and bibliographical references. It presents Michelangelo’s stay in Rome, his residence on Via Macel de’Corvi, his commitments for large commissions in Rome. It is a story that is re-woven in the light of the documents of the parish, generating useful information for understanding the figure of Michelangelo as a believer, with his timely presence at celebrations, his relationship with the friars working at the parish, guardian fathers, right up to that young Friar Felice Peretti, the future Pope Sixtus V, for whom he would complete some projects at St. Peter’s.

The commemoration of Frescobaldi and Michelangelo will be the focus of the closing ceremony on Sunday, March 2, at 6.30 p.m., with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi.
Fourth Franciscan Bishop in Zambia

Friar Tadeusz Świątkowski / red. rb / trad. mf

In addition to attending an episcopal ordination, during the months of January-February, 2014, the Assistant General for the AFCOF (African Federation of Conventual Friars), Friar Tadeusz Świątkowski, visited friars in initial formation.

The Assistant General was able to meet with novices in Ndola, Zambia (11), clerical philosophy students in Lusaka, Zambia (68) and theology students in Nairobi, Kenya (35).

On the occasion of this fraternal visit, the young friars were updated on current events in the Church and the Order in general. Issues concerning their own level of formation were dealt with as well.

On February 1, the visitator participated in the rite of episcopal ordination of one of our Zambian friars, Patrick Chisanga, whom our Holy Father Francis named Bishop of the Diocese of Mansa. Friar Patrick, who had been the Minister Provincial up until his election, had also been the rector of the formation House in Lusaka.

The Province of Zambia, during its long history (dating back to early 1930), has given the Universal Church four of its friars as bishops: Mazzieri (now Servant of God), Agnozzi, Potani and Chisanga. Two of them are Zambian by birth. The ordination was attended the Apostolic Nuncio to Zambia and Malawi, Archbishop Julio Murat. The ceremony was also attended by fourteen Zambian bishops, including the Most Reverend, Gianfranco Girotti, OFM Conv., who came for the occasion accompanied by Friar Francesco Cocco, the personal secretary of the General Minister, Marco Tasca. Also present was the General Postulator, Friar Angelo Paleri. The whole celebration lasted five hours and was attended by many of the faithful. They were full of joy because after waiting five years they now had their new Bishop.

The new Bishop, Chisanga, is currently the fifth Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mansa, which is located in the northwest part of Zambia, 600 km from Ndola. (There are 11 dioceses throughout the country).
New Franciscan Bishop in Costa Rica

On Saturday, March 1, 2014, Friar Enrique Montero Umaña was consecrated as the fifth Titular Bishop of the Diocese of “San Isidro de El General” in southern Costa Rica.

For the occasion, the whole town appeared to be joyfully caught up in the festive atmosphere, especially with the presence of so many guests from different parts of the country and the world.

Bishop Emeritus Guillermo Loría, of the Diocese of San Isidro de El General, was the consecrator. The homily, however, was given by Archbishop Emeritus Hugo Barrantes of San José. Those present included the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca, the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina, (FALC) Friar Jorge Fernández, some Ministers Provincial from the United States, Friar Justin Biase (Immaculate Conception) and Friar James McCurry (St. Anthony); the Custos of Central America (Honduras), Friar Grevin Sierra; all the friars and postulants of Costa Rica, as well as several friars from Honduras and the United States.

Thirteen bishops concelebrated, some from Costa Rica, others from Panama. There was even an OFM Conv. Bishop from the Vatican, Bishop Gianfranco Girotti and another from the United States, Bishop Gregory Hartmayer, of Savannah. There were also many religious, seminarians and laypersons as well as several representatives of the civil authorities in the area. Finally, Friar Enrique’s large family was represented by a great number of brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces, great-nephews and nieces, etc.

Friar Enrique chose, as his episcopal motto, a phrase taken from the Benedictus: “Let us serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness,” and his episcopal shield bore the Franciscan coat of arms, in which St. Francis, with his hand stigmatized, crosses arms with the crucified Jesus.

After the ceremony of consecration, all of the bishops, priests, religious and seminarians present were invited to a nice lunch at the Diocesan Chancery.

On Sunday, March 2, all the friars and postulants shared a festive lunch at the friary in Alajuela along with the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca.

Friar Enrique Montero Umaña is a priest of the American Province of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM (Delegation of Costa Rica), born in Moravia (Costa Rica) on November 6, 1945, he professed his temporary vows on February 2, 1965, his solemn vows on February 24, 1972 and was ordained a priest on August 16, 1973.
Antonine Missions

Friar Luciano Marini / trad. mf

Besides having custody of the body our blessed father Francis, providence and history have also given our religious family care of the body of our brother Anthony of Padua.

This great gift demands, in a particular way, that we keep his memory alive and continue his mission in the Church and the world.

Especially after the canonical recognition of Saint Anthony’s body in 1981, many Christian communities have requested to have a pilgrimage of the relics of the Saint among their people. Since then, the Province of Padua has commissioned some friars to carry out this pastoral initiative which we now call the “Antonine Mission”. It is, in fact, a short, popular mission where, for about a week, these friars meet children, young people, the sick; visit schools, hospitals and prisons.

There are many celebrations offered with texts taken from the writings of the Saint (Eucharistic adoration, penance services, prayer vigils, the transitus of Saint Anthony, processions, etc.) The purpose of these missions is to bring the many devotees of the Saint from devotion to faith, from Anthony to Jesus.

Popular piety, as Pope Francis reminds us in his encyclical, is fertile ground on which you can sow “the only Word that saves”, as the Saint writes. The crowds rushing to the veneration of the relics are always very large. We friars want to lend our poor voices there in order that Saint Anthony might continue his mission of evangelization and charity.

Until now, the relics of the Saint in Padua have pretty much been all over the world. Last year the friars did Antonine missions in USA, England, Ireland, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Poland, Slovakia, Russia, France and some twenty Christian communities in Italy. And already dozens of missions are scheduled for 2014.

If the communities of our Order make a timely request, their demand will certainly take precedence over any others.

www.santantonio.org/portale/home.asp

Diaconal Ordination in Rome

Friar Paolo M. Carola / trad. mf

On March 25, 2014, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, two friars of the Seraphicum College in Rome, Jozef Sukenik and Paolo Fan, were ordained deacons in the Basilica of the XII Holy Apostles.

Friar Jozef is part of the Custody of Slovakia. Friar Paolo is Chinese and belongs to the Custody of Assisi.

Friar Jozef arrived in Rome two years ago, while he was temporarily professed, and began studying Christology at our faculty. He professed his solemn vows last October in Slovakia.

Friar Paolo Fan completed his theological studies at Assisi and came to Rome last October to begin a licentiate in Pastoral Theology at Salesian University.
It’s always nice to see fellow travelers arrive at their day of ordination. It shows everyone the goal we aim for: an ever more perfect conformity to Christ! It makes it clear that the Lord does not call people without flaws, but real people, fellow travelers, who have agreed to walk with Him.

The ordination was presided over by our local ordinary, Bishop Gianfranco Ghirotti. The temporarily professed performed liturgical services. The singing of the Litany of the Saints was moving as always, with the candidates lying prostrate on the ground before the imposition of the Bishop’s hands. After the celebration, as usual, there was a fraternal get-together where the new deacons were able to greet friars, relatives and friends.
One of the responsibilities of the General Secretariat for Formation (SGF) is to offer incentives for reflection and provide useful material for formators, those being formed and all the friars of the Order, concerning initial and ongoing formation.

For this purpose, we are updating our webpage dedicated to SGF. The webpage now has links in place to access documents of the Church and the Order which have special relevance regarding formation and the consecrated life.

We are also planning to list the names and contact addresses of the friars who are responsible for vocation promotion in each of the Jurisdictions of the Order. We ask those of you who are not yet recorded in this list to please send us your details.

The webpage is in the process of constructing a “bibliofmconvonline” which will provide resource materials (like articles, books and lectures in various languages spoken in the Order). This should be particularly useful for both formators and trainees. For this initiative we ask you to send please articles, in your native language or another, which are related to initial and ongoing formation, the history of the Order, Franciscan spirituality etc. Please send the files in PDF format to the email address of the SGF.

Finally, when you enter the SGF webpage on our Website, you might notice a logo designed to motivate us to reflect on this Year of Formation as “Conformation with Christ”. The logo is inspired by the recently added opening chapter of Franciscan Discipleship entitled, “Formation: Following the Path of Conforming Oneself to Christ”. We also ask you to utilize and explore this document of the Order on Formation. To access us on the Homepage go to:

Main menu ----> General Curia of the Order ----> Secretaries ----> for Formation SGF

The email address for the General Secretariat for Formation is:

sgf@ofmconv.net
“Mission Together” is a Franciscan formation project for intercultural mission. It is part of ongoing formation and is aimed at students of the Seraphicum.

“Mission Together” began in 2007 and is supported by the General Curia. The first goal in this formation process is for a small group of friars to live the Mission TOGETHER, enjoying the beauty of sharing, preparing themselves to encounter others, experiencing a different reality, talking to other persons from whom they can LEARN.

The initial step is to listen attentively, to embrace diversity and to treasure it.

Later, in the encounter with a brother: to create a “DIALOGUE” that comes from the heart; that preserves history and speaks “words” that point to the Gospel, seeking ecclesial communion, co-responsibility and cooperation.

Since January of 2014, under the guidance of Friar Sorin Giurgi of Romania, Friars Paul Fan of China, José Alberto Suárez Alemán of Venezuela and Gabriel Pangilinan of the Philippines, have been preparing themselves for a trip to Kenya, the country where the project will be realized.

Once a week, the friars have met to study the theology of mission and to study the real situation inside the country, to learn about any problems related to having a presence of the Order in this part of Africa, to learn English, etc.

In August the friars will leave for Kenya. We wish them a good experience!
Visit to the House of Formation in Bratislava

Friar Jarosław Wysocki, the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (SGAM), made a fraternal visit to the Province of the Czech Republic.

On January 14-15, 2014, Friar Jarosław Wysocki, the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (SGAM), made a fraternal visit to the Province of the Czech Republic.

He had the opportunity to visit the community of Bratislava where there is a House of formation for the friars of the Custody of Slovakia and Province of the Czech Republic.

Among the brothers from the Czech Republic were Friars Wladimir Hubalovsky, Josef Maria Urana and Petr Machacek.

The meeting took place in a climate of fraternal dialogue on the subject of the missions of the Order and the joy experienced over the canonization of Blessed Angela of Foligno, which occurred a few weeks ago.

On January 15, a meeting was held with friars from the Czech Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

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Fraternal Visits in Hungary and the Czech Republic

Friar Jarosław Wysocki, Secretary General for Mission Animation (SGAM), led two days of prayer, discussion and personal work in two different places.

The first took place on February 8, 2014 in Miskolc, at a friary of the Province of St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Transylvania. The second took place on February 11, in Prague, at a friary of Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Czech Republic. Previously, he had met and spoken with all the friars of both provinces.

During each of the two days, he talked about rediscovering the joy of living and how feeling loved at a personal and communal level is a beautiful part of religious life, a “modus vivendi”, that makes it possible to make realistic, practical decisions together concerning our works, houses, activities and commitments and to joyfully experience a new stage in the revitalization of the provinces. His talk was an incentive towards personal and community conversion.

On the first day, each province held its own definitory meeting, both of which were attended by Friar Jacek Ciupinski the Assistant General for the CEO (Conferentia Europae Orientalis).

It was proposed to the friars that responding to the motions of the General Chapter of 2013 could be a starting point for recovering relationships, with oneself and with all the members of one’s province.
Mission Animation in Burkina Faso

“One doesn’t give because one has. One gives because one loves”. With these words in his heart, spoken by the newly-elected Cardinal Philippe Nakellentuba Ouédraogow, Friar Jarosław Wysoczański, the Secretary General for Missionary Animation, set out to visit our friars in Burkina Faso.

On March 14-24, 2014, Friar Jarek experienced some very hot weather in Burkina Faso. But he also experienced a climate of friendliness, openness, order and solidarity between the friars and the people with whom they live and work.

The main objective of his visit to Burkina Faso was to study our presence there and our prospects for further developments of the Order in French-speaking African countries.

The first missionaries of the Order in Burkina Faso came from Italy on September 12, 2001. They were: Friars Massimiliano Baccile, Carmine Castiglione and Lorenzo Valentini.

Shortly after the arrival of these first missionaries, the Province of Abruzzo (Italy) requested cooperation from the Order to develop the new mission. Help came from the Province of Warsaw in Poland.


There are currently two communities in Burkina Faso: Sabou and Ouagadougou. In recent years a formation house was established in the Capital and stands ready to welcome the Friars. Four friars live there: two solemnly professed, one in temporary vows and one postulant.

In the community of Sabou there are three friars engaged in pastoral work at the parish. They are also in charge of the missionary hospital.

The Delegation has also some friars in formation houses of the African Federation of Conventual Friars (AFCOF).

During each visit, whatever one gives, one receives much more in return. Special thanks to one of the younger missionaries for a nice comment he made during a meal shared with some catechists: “People in Burkina Faso celebrate food; they often have only one meal a day in the form of rice and cooked cabbage sauce”. Friar Jarek was quite taken aback by this remark. He realized that he lives in a part of the world where many people struggle with cholesterol and finally die. And yet very few are committed to the kind of lifestyle that could be achieved if these two worlds were brought together.

We should seek greater solidarity with them so that no one ever dies of starvation. Sharing food with the brothers in Burkina Faso gave Friar Jarek a boost of energy, not just for sustaining his life, but for celebrating the grace of life itself.

All that remains is to invite the friars of the Order to have greater solidarity with this part of the planet. The friars of Burkina Faso are willing to receive new missionaries from other jurisdictions of the Order in preparation for the opening of a new presence in Francophone Africa.

Surely there are friars and provinces willing take the old saying of the Mossi people to heart: “One doesn’t give because one has. One gives because one loves”.

From the life of the friars
The Canonization of Angela da Foligno

Thanksgiving celebrations for the canonization of Angela of Foligno began on January 3 with local Bishop Gualtiero Sigismondi presiding over Evening Prayer at the Church of St. Francis in Foligno.

On January 4, at 4:30, His Eminence, Cardinal Angelo Amato presided over the solemn Eucharistic celebration. The reading of the Decretal of Canonization was given, for which the Church in Foligno had waited seven centuries. In addition to Cardinal Angelo Amato, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, there were two other Cardinals present: Ennio Antonelli and Joseph Betori, as well as many bishops of the Episcopal Conference and many priests from Umbria together with a large crowd of people.

After a greeting from the Minister Provincial of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis, the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca, read part of the Decretal Letter written on October 9, 2013:

“For the glory of God, the exaltation of the faith and the increase of the Christian life, by virtue of our apostolic authority, We determine that Angela of Foligno, of the Secular Franciscan Order, is holy and that, as such, must be entered in the catalog of saints and should be piously honored and invoked among the saints of the Universal Church.”

Prayer

Angela, with new wonder we hear your name echo in the Litany of the Saints, in your life we recognize the awesome power the love of God, the “origin and source of all Holiness”. With sincere eagerness we invoke your intercession. You have experienced that “nothing is more treacherous then the heart”, the unfathomable abyss. Help us to believe that God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.

You have felt the sadness of sin and the richness of divine mercy; help us bring forth the fruits of true conversion: “humility, patience, and meekness”. You have discovered that pain in the shadow of the Cross is the seal of love; grant that we may be “joyful in hope, constant in tribulation, persevering in prayer”. You have walked the high paths of the mystic and found refuge at the Pascal table of “Eucharistic awe” make our hearts “simple, humble and free.” You have tempered “feminine tenderness with manly courage”. Give us the strength to follow the Lord and to serve his bride, the Church, faithfully and with total dedication.

You have earned the title “Mistress of Theologians” studying “the harmony between human wisdom and revealed truth; grant us the fire to “refine hearts and minds”. You have followed in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, the “Catholic and apostolic man”. Revive in us the missionary impulse to begin preaching the Gospel. Angela, your light shines in the firmament of Saints to protect us, to educate and to guide us. By your testimony of faith, the Lord “offers us an example, aid through your intercession and the bond of your sisterly love through the communion of grace”. Amen.

+Gualtiero Sigismondi, Bishop of Foligno
Friar Francis Zirano, Soon to Be a Saint

Friar Umberto Zucca / trad. mf

On Friday, February 8, 2014, the Pope himself authorized the publication of the Decree of Beatification of the Servant of God, Friar Francis Zirano, Conventual Franciscan of Sassari, as a martyr.

Friar Francis went to Algiers 1602 to ransom slaves and was killed there on January 25, 1603, by some men who basically hated the Faith. The fervent belief that was immediately manifested by the Christian slaves who collected his bones and skin as relics, soon led to the Church granting his public cult and, at the same time, identifying him as a model of life for Christians and an intercessor in Heaven.

This has been the culmination of a delicate labor, long and complex, carried out in three phases over the past 35 years. First of all there was the study phase in which extensive searching was done to track down all possible documents about his life, his martyrdom and the renown of his martyrdom. This was carried out for eight years (1978/85) in archives and libraries; especially in Sardinia, the Vatican, Italy and Spain, through the efforts of the Friars Minor Conventual of Sardinia.

The second phase took place at the diocesan level. Here, the cause was truly launched by the Archbishop of Sassari, Salvatore Isgrò. There were some noteworthy milestones: the favorable opinion of the Episcopate in Sardinia, the edict directed at the clergy and the faithful (11/25/1984), the years of work done by a historical commission on the attached documents, and the process, or diocesan inquiry, which concluded with a public meeting on September 7, 1991 in the Church of St. Mary of Bethlehem, Sassari, where Friar Francis Zirano had lived for 22 years.

The third phase involved the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. After the Decree of Legal Validity from the diocesan inquiry (June 3, 1992), an examination of the “Position on the Martyrdom of the Servant of God” was carried out by three bodies, or sections, of the Congregation. They issued their positive pronouncements in the following order: Historical Experts (March 4, 2003); Theological Consultors (May 16, 2013), Cardinals and Bishops (February 4, 2014).

Now we await the publication of the Decree of Beatification, bearing the Pope’s signature and date of beatification, and, at the end, will present a summary of the life of this Blessed and current news about him.
The www.francis35.org website is offering a free text: Franciscans for Ecology, put together by the Inter-Franciscan Commission for Justice, Peace and Safeguarding Creation.

On the 35th Anniversary of the papal proclamation of St. Francis as the “heavenly Patron of those who promote ecology” (1979), a great legacy is explored in order to elicit a corresponding commitment.

The ecological cause is particularly urgent today. The Franciscan family and the many admirers of the Saint of Assisi are showing up on the front line.

Even Pope Francis invites us to activate an ‘ecology of caring’, because: “whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened.” (Homily, March 19, 2013).

On this same website you can also find material for reflection and prayer written in different languages including norms for inter-religious celebration.

The first presentation of Franciscans for Ecology appeared on the website of L’Osservatore Romano on March 21.
Some Notes of Thanks...

For offering Holy Masses:
- The Italian Prov. of St. Anthony
- The Custody of Canada

For the Needs of the Order:
- the IC Province, USA
- the Italian Prov. of St. Anthony
- the OLC Province, USA
- the Province of Croatia

Thanks also to those who have been using the General Curia as a channel of communications and contributions.

Email addresses:
General Economo: economato@ofmconv.net
General Exactor: economatoesat@ofmconv.net
Meeting of the Guardians in Slovenia

On January 27-29, 2014, the annual meeting of guardians and treasurers from the friaries of the Province of St. Joseph of Slovenia was held at the friary of Blessed Anton M. Slomšek in Olimian.

In attendance were all of the guardians from the nine friaries of the Province and a representative from its only filial house. It was the last meeting before the Provincial Chapter which will be celebrated in the second half of next April.

After the welcome and a presentation of the program of the meeting by the Minister Provincial, Friar Milan Kos, there was a presentation by the Assistant General for the CEC (Conferentia Europae Centralis), Friar Miljenko Hontić, on what’s new in the Order. Friar Miljenko also presented the plan for the Revision of the Constitutions which was prepared by the CERC (Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions).

Then there were reports from the guardians on the status of their communities over the past year. Their reports were presented to the government of the Province according to an outline prepared by the Minister Provincial and his Definitory. The reports evaluated various aspects life in the fraternity: the practice of the evangelical counsels, fraternal life, prayer life, and finally, life in the apostolate and pastoral ministry.

The meeting second day was devoted to listening to reports of the treasurers of the friaries.

The meeting ended with festivities for two confreres who were celebrating their name-days this month. At this event, as is traditional, they were joined by friars from other communities of the province.
Meeting of the Guardians in Croatia

Friar Miljenko Hontić / trad. mf

On January 30-31, 2014, the Friary of the Holy Spirit in Zagreb hosted the annual meeting of the guardians and the government of the Province of Saint Jerome of Croatia.

There were ten guardians present, and a vicar, from the twelve friaries of the Province. There was also a representative for the three “national missionary” friars who are living and working in Germany.

The first part of the meeting was on formation. Earlier, the Minister Provincial, Friar Ljudevit Maračić, had presented the Six-Year Plan of the Order 2013-2019 (recently translated and printed in the Croatian language), which was then delivered to each guardian for their respective communities.

Next, there was a spiritual reflection on ongoing formation, according to the documents of the Church and the Order. It was led by the Provincial Vicar, Friar Josip Blažević. To conclude the segment on formation, Assistant General Friar Miljenko Hontić presented the latest developments on the work of the Revision of the Constitutions and the outline for this work organized by the CERC (Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions).

The second part of the meeting featured reports from the provincial offices, houses of formation and the provincial treasurer. Finally, each guardian submitted a report on the life of his community in the past year.

The meeting ended with an alert from the Minister Provincial concerning the time remaining before the upcoming Provincial Chapter which starts on March 9.

Meeting of the Guardians in Germany

Friar Andreas Murk / trad. mf

From January 27-29, 2014, the Minister Provincial of Germany, Friar Bernardino M. Seither, called together the guardians of the friaries of the Province of St. Elizabeth of Germany, the Custody of St. Leopold and St. Nicholas Flüe of Austria-Switzerland, and the Polish and Romanian friaries in Germany, to a meeting at the Maria Hilf Friary in Schwarzenberg.

Although not all of those summoned were able to attend, 15 friars did meet for an informative and fraternal exchange. Within the context of ongoing formation, Ms. Gabriele Heid of Würzburg spoke on the topic: “The Reception of Psychologically Disturbed People at the Door and in the Cloister of the Friary.” The lecture offered guidance on how to accompany and help men and women who are psychologically wounded and how one might give them relief in a brief encounter.
During the three-day meeting, the feast day and birthday of two of the guardians were celebrated. This created space for some recreation during the meeting which was shared by other friars of the Province of Germany.

### Ongoing Formation in Germany

**Friar Mateusz Kotyło /trad. mf**

On February 18-21, 2014, at the friary in Schwarzenberg, the Province of St. Elizabeth in Germany held the first of its two scheduled meetings for ongoing formation. The event was titled: “I Feel Like Living Again”.

Speakers at the meeting were: Sr. Johanna Domek, a Benedictine author of books on spirituality and an aid to dependent persons and Dr. Rüdiger-Rolf Salloch-Vogel, a physician and psychotherapist, who, for about 26 years, directed a Berlin clinic for addicts.

The friars mainly discussed issues related to dependency. The speakers talked about how to live with alcoholics, smokers, drug addicts, prescription drug addicts, etc., and ways to get...
out of those relationships. They showed concrete steps in the fight against dependency and how to liberate oneself from it. A presentation on the 12-step program used by Alcoholics Anonymous was very useful. This way out, based on inspiration from the Bible, is a fairly well-known model and has spread throughout the world. For many of the participants it was a great opportunity to explore themes related to the problems discussed.

Beyond reflection and discussion there was time as well for celebrating the Eucharist together, for prayer and for fraternal gathering.

During the meeting, there was also the occasion to celebrate the birthday of Friar Josef, the Novice Master and Director of Postulants.

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**Meeting with the Definitory in Germany**

Friar Miljenko Hontić / trad. mf

On March 21-25, 2014, the Assistant General for the Conferentia Europae Centralis (CEC), Friar Miljenko Hontić, made a visit to the two German friaries at Würzburg and Schwarzenberg.

The friary and House of Formation at Schwarzenberg have been undergoing renovations. Now the work is almost finished. During Holy Week, this friary will host a formation encounter for clerics of the CEC.

Meanwhile, in Würzburg, work is beginning on an even larger project to restore the friary and the former Seminary of St. Valentin.

The Assistant General for the CEC also took the opportunity to meet with the Minister Provincial and his Definitory during their session. During the meeting several issues were addressed: specific personal cases, the approval of the financial statements of the friaries of the Province, and the provincial assessments levied. There was also talk about the property at Kaiserslautern, that is, the former friary and parish there. Negotiations are ongoing with the diocese for a possible sale involving a special collaboration at the level of the CEC conference. Finally, the Minister Provincial unveiled the dates of various events that are scheduled for the second half of this year as well as those for the next year.

For some time now, the friary at Würzburg has posted a virtual tour of the friary and the friars’ church on its website.

We therefore invite you to visit the Würzburg friary webpage at:

www.franziskanerkloster-wuerzburg.de
Meeting of the Formators of the Province of Cracow

On February 10-12, 2014, the Convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Zakopane (Poland) hosted the first meeting of Formators of the Polish Province of Saint Anthony of Padua and Blessed James of Strepar (Cracow).

The meeting was attended by the Vocation Promoter and Director of Postulants in Ukraine, Friar Stanisław Nuckowski; the Formators from the OFM Conventual Major Seminary in Cracow, Friars Andrzej Zając (Rector), Mariusz Koziół (Vice-Rector) and Tomasz Czajka (Treasurer); the Novice Master, Friar Paweł Gogola; the Director of Postulants, Friar Bartosz Pawłowski; the Province Vocation Promoters, Friars Piotr Dąbek and Marcin Drąg and the Vicar Provincial and Prefect of Studies, Friar Piotr Stanisławczyk.

The participants shared their experiences regarding the different levels of formation.

Currently the Province has:

- 2 postulants in Ukraine (one from Uzbekistan and one from Ukraine);
- 5 postulants in Poland (among these, one is from the Czech Province);
- 3 novices (among these, one is from the Czech Province);
- 31 friars in the Major Seminary of Cracow (among these, one is not proceeding to the priesthood). At the end of the academic year, the community of friars will become smaller because five of them will be finishing their last year of studies.

The main theme of the meeting was the pastoral care of vocations in the Province. Many young people declare their desire to be part of our Order but only a few have the firm will to remain. There is a sizeable group of men who are interested but cannot be admitted into religious life for reasons of health (mental disorders recognized).
The vocation promoters have begun pastoral work with young people who are part of various youth groups around our friaries and are interested in the discerning their own vocation. To this end, the promoters have prepared several prayer initiatives and various workshops. They invited all pastoral workers to a closer and more communal collaboration. In the Province there already exist some pastoral initiatives that provide for vocation encounters at which the friars in charge invite some youth. The efforts nurture the hope that in the future, among the candidates of the Order, there might be some even “more called” coming from the circle of Franciscan Ministry.

The meeting was also an opportunity for community prayer and rest.

The reflections, insights and conclusions of the meeting were forwarded to the Minister Provincial.

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**Franciscans at the March for Life in Prague**

Friar Jacek Ciupiński / red rb / trad. mf

On March 28, 2014, the Franciscan friary in Prague hosted a Provincial Definitory meeting for the Friars Minor Conventual Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Czech Republic.

The Assistant General for the Conferentia Europae Orientalis (CEO), Friar Jacek Ciupiński, was also present. The Definitory meeting was aimed at resolving some current problems in the Province.

The following day, some of the Definitors and the Assistant General took part in a March for Life which had been organized on the streets of the city center by “pro-life” movements of the Czech Republic.
Visitation in California

From January 15th until February 3rd, Friar Jude Winkler, the Assistant General for the CFC, conducted the general canonical visitation of St. Joseph Cupertino Province in California in preparation for its Ordinary Provincial Chapter this May.

The visitation began and ended with a meeting with the Provincial Definitory. There are 6 friaries in California and 1 in Nevada, mostly associated with parishes. Each presence has a distinct character. The friars in the Los Angeles parish serve a community not far from the beach which includes a large Hispanic community.

The friars on the Central Coast minister mostly to retired people.

A parish in Coalinga serves a community in the midst of one of the poorest counties in the country. In San Pablo the friars serve in a parish where Mass is regularly celebrated in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog and a Loatian dialect. St. Paul of the Shipwreck is a traditionally African-American parish in San Francisco, while St. Thomas Aquinas in Reno is the cathedral for the diocese of Reno.

This Province also serves in the mission in Vietnam. Fr. Benedict Baek, the Assistant General for the FAMC, will conduct a visitation there later in the spring.

Toward the end of this visitation, a new Provincial was elected by mail ballot, Friar John Heinz.
Prayer for the Antonian Associations

Friar Jude Winkler / red. mf

On March 29, Friar Jude Winkler, the Assistant General for the Conventual Franciscan Conference (CFC) presented a day of prayer to the Anthonian Associations of the United States and Canada.

It was held at the Holy Cross Retreat House in Mesilla Park, New Mexico (a retreat house run by the friars of Our Lady of Consolation Province).

The general directors of Messenger in Padua, including Friar Mario Conti, the director of the English edition, were present.

The topic of the talk was about our need to know St. Anthony better as a friend lest we use him as a commodity and not relate to him as a person. Friar Jude emphasized that in his Sermones, we can see how St. Anthony recognized that the various dimensions of reality (the natural, supernatural, study, nature, etc.) are all united to Christ and in Christ.

The participants

ATTENZIONE

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER

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Vicar General vicgen@ofmconv.net
Secretary General segrjen@ofmconv.net
Assistant General for the AFCOF afcof@ofmconv.net
Assistant General for the CEO ceo@ofmconv.net
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Assistant General for the CIMP cimp@ofmconv.net
Assistant General for the FAMC famc@ofmconv.net
Assistant General for the FALC falc@ofmconv.net
**Priestly Ordination in the Province of Romania**

Friar Daniel Romila / red. rb / trad. mf

On January 11, 2014, the Province of St. Joseph of Romania joyfully celebrated the priestly ordination of Friar Sergiu Cătălin Farcaș.

The celebration took place on the vigil of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, at the Basilica of the Assumption of Mary Most Holy of Alcamo (Trapani, Italy). At 6 p.m., Most Reverend, Pietro Maria Fragnelli, Bishop of Trapani, ordained four new priests, including Friar Sergiu Farcaș, from the Province of Romania. Friar Sergiu was born in Tîrgu Frumos (Iași, Romania) October 10, 1986. He entered seminary on September 10, 2001, made his temporary profession September 9, 2007 and took his solemn vows on September 10, 2011.

In addition to the Bishop, the celebration was attended by the Minister Provincial of Sicily, Friar Giambattista Spoto along with Friar Daniel Romila, the Provincial Secretary of the Province of Romania. Friar Daniel was serving as a Provincial Delegate for his Minister Provincial. There were also about 100 priests attending, many consecrated persons and many of the faithful, including the families of the newly ordained priests who came from all over Sicily.

We wish the new priests much fruit in the Vineyard of the Lord!

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**Visit to the Custody of the Orient and the Holy Land**

Friar Joaquin Agesta / red. rb / trad. mf

From January 22 to February 3, the Custody of the Orient and the Holy Land, part of the CIMP region (Conference of Intermediterranean Ministers Provincial), was visited by the Assistant General, Friar Joaquin Agesta, in anticipation of its upcoming Ordinary Chapter to be held next May and July.

For the last four years, the Custody has legally belonged St. Joseph Province of Romania. It has five friaries, three in Turkey (Istanbul, Büyükdere and Iskenderun) and two in Lebanon (Beirut and Zahle).
The fraternal visit took place in a climate of sharing and dialogue. In terms of the New Evangelization, it allowed us to make the most of the friars’ testimony about living in the midst of Islam, testimony already established for years. It renewed our capacity for the acceptance and respect it takes to open new roads to coexistence between cultures and religions (in this sense, Saint Anthony church in Istanbul is a most noteworthy example), and to increase interfaith dialogue—particularly between the different rites of the Catholic Church (Lebanon).

Over the course of the present quadrennial, the friars have come to Zahle, in the Beqaa Valley (Lebanon). This is where the Custody presently has a formation house and is constructing a church around the friary. The friars are also busy with the care of refugees coming from Syria, and other charitable ministries, in collaboration with the brothers of the OFS and other seculars.

The Custody currently has one Lebanese postulant and four temporarily-professed friars studying at the “Seraphicum”.

Best wishes to the young Custody, which is rich in initiatives, carried out with intensity and passion. It represents hope for the Order’s “inter-Saracen” commitment. Happy journey!

Postulancy Program at Osimo

Friar Joaquín Agesta / red rb / trad. mf

The postulancy program at Osimo is a new step in the formation program that started as an initiative of the Union of the Provinces of Central Italy and Sardinia, soon to be the future Province of St. Francis.

At this time, the program has nine postulants; four from Puglia, and one each from Umbria, Romana, the Marches, Tuscany and Sardinia.

The fraternal community that takes care of the spiritual heritage of St. Joseph of Cupertino and serves the pastoral life of the Shrine was exemplary in welcoming the group of postulants as well as the leadership of the two formators, Friar Paolo Bocci and Friar Danilo Marinelli, which was appreciated by all, in a climate of serenity and commitment.
Friar Joaquin Agesta, the Assistant General for the CIMP (Conference of Intermediterranean Ministers Provincial) visited the postulancy program on February 6-9, 2014. He shared ordinary and extraordinary moments meeting and dialoguing with the formators and postulants.

Everyone appreciated the exemplary and always discreet presence of our former Minister General, Friar Lanfranco Serrini; his good example and his encouragement were once again a great help to the friars, the visitors and the postulants themselves who were grateful to be able to “pamper” him. At nearly 90 years old, he keeps an acceptable pace of life with a little bit of help getting around in the friary and managing his personal activities.

Best wishes for a happy journey to the whole community of Osimo!

Thinking About the Custody of France-Belgium

A few days after the conclusion of the Ordinary Chapter of the Custody of France-Belgium, Friar Marie Daniel Thévenets offers a succinct account of the experience:

“We have experienced a miracle –three days of good weather in Lourdes! The deserted city has given us time to reflect deeply, day and night, before the Grotto.

All eighteen friars who work in the Custody were present. They visibly represented the complete range of the seven national identities which make up our little fraternal entity. Guiding us in our labors was Friar Joaquin Agesta, the Assistant General for the Conference of Intermediterranean Ministers Provincial (CIMP); Friar John Voltan, Minister Provincial of the Province of Northern Italy and his Provincial Secretary, Friar Frederick Santolin.

Some of us did not know each other yet: in fact, the Custody has undergone various transitions in recent times. So, this was a good opportunity for us to evaluate the life plan that animates us, which is based on the four-year plan of the Custody and the Custodial Statutes. Those were drawn up during the last Chapter and they inspire our common life.

We were also able to measure the strength of the ideals we share in common with the whole Order, versus the fragile state of our own little enterprise: the circumstances – and imperatives – which pushed us to open three friaries in the last ten years (Cholet, Lourdes and Brussels). Often our strength seems pretty feeble compared to the challenges.
We re-read or discovered – for newcomers – our history through the various “reports” made by those in charge. We have thus been able to reassert the primacy of God in our lives, to thank Him for the young candidates who are just entering or are in formation, to measure the impact of our initiatives ministering to youth or large gatherings of families, to appreciate the growing and balanced role of the laity (through the OSF for example—our neighbors in prayer, fraternity and apostolate). We have been able to point out the crossroads between our long Franciscan tradition and the new spirituality that challenges us, to question ourselves about ancient and present-day forms of prayer and apostolate. We have been able to look positively at our choices (visibility, simplicity of life, commitment to contemplation and being daring in life).

Consciousness of our weakness makes us confident: God will sort out everything, through the Immaculate who has hosted us in her city of Lourdes.

The Definitory has been elected: Friar François -Xavier Bustillo, Custos (third term); Friar Daniel-Marie Thévenet (Vicar); Friar Jean-François-Marie Auclair (Secretary); and Friar Petru Andrés (Definitor).

The second part of the Chapter will take place at the same Saint Maximilian friary in Lourdes from April 27-30. Two of our clerics will be present.

We greet all of you throughout the Order with affection as we seek to live ancient and ever new forms with the inspiration that comes from Francis. And we salute the many lay people who support our efforts with their prayers and generosity."

The 38th Assembly of the CMPFF in Italy

Friar Marco Bellachioma / red rb / trad. mf

The 38th Assembly of the Union of the Conferences of Ministers Provincial of the Franciscan Family in Italy was held at the “Approdo” Reception Center–San Giovanni Rotondo, March 17-21, 2014.

The 38th Assembly of the Conference of Ministers Provincial of the Franciscan Family in Italy opened on Monday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m.

“Veni Creator” was sung to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit upon the Major Superiors who were gathered in the conference room of the “Approdo” Reception Center in San Giovanni Rotondo.

The first to greet the assembly was the President of the Union, Friar Francesco Colacelli, OFM Cap. He was followed by Friar Michele Pellegrini, OFM Conv., who spoke on behalf of the Provincials of Puglia. Lastly, Friar Paolo Fiasconaro, OFM Conv., the Secretary of the Union, spoke to the attending 53 Ministers Provincial. He noted that, following the Assembly convened last year in Loreto, there were 29 Provincial Chapters that were celebrated in Italy. From these, 15 new Provincials were elected: 7 from the OFM Cap., 4 from the OFM and 4 from the OFM Conv.
The second workday started early, at 7.00 a.m. The 53 participating Major Superiors were transferred by bus to the new Shrine of St. Pio. There, Father Marko Ivan Rupnik, SJ, led a tour of the crypt, showing the mosaics he made for it and later presided over Morning Prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist.

Once back at the “Approdo” Reception Center, the Provincials heard a presentation from Friar Giacomo Bini, former Minister General of the OFM, on the fundamental theme of the Assembly: “Called to Consistency…Pope Francis Challenges Us”. It was followed by an interesting exchange of experiences about possible new ways for the Franciscan presence in the world to be prophetic.

At 4:00 in the afternoon, Marco Bartoli, Professor of medieval history at LUMSA, and expert in Franciscan and Claretian studies, gave a talk on “Go and Repair...Being Franciscans in the Church of Pope Francis”

Even after this presentation, the assembled Provincials debated with the speaker, mostly on the topic of “the outskirts” and the poor.

On the third workday, the Provincials were divided into three main study groups according to their regional origins: North, Central and South. The Major Superiors were thus able to exchange experiences in a workshop setting. Two topics were dealt with:

a) Our charismatic identity is clear, simple, current and strongly actionable: to live the Gospel in fraternity and minority, and “go forth” to bring it to the world. What hinders this missionary spirit, this spirituality of encounter that is the expression and measure of a living faith? (Report of Friar Giacomo Bini);

b) Christian hope arises from mercy. How do we increase those gestures of mercy which open us up to hope? (Report by Prof. Marco Bartoli)

The leaders of the three groups were: Friar Sabino Iannuzzi OFM, (North), Friar Giancarlo Corsini, OFM Conv., (Central), Fr. Francesco Colacelli, OFM Cap., (South).

Late in the morning the Conference of CASIT-OFS and the National Assistants of the GiFra (Franciscan Youth) a came together to meet with the entire Assembly and discuss topics relating to support service.

At 4:00 p.m., each individual Conference of Ministers Provincial began its own work and then the Conference of Intermediterranean Ministers Provincial (CIMP) met to examine some issues placed on the agenda.

On the last workday, the General Assembly gathered at noon to examine the life of the Union of the Conferences of Ministers Provincial of the Franciscan Family in Italy. At the beginning, Prof. Stefano Brufani, Secretary of the International Society of Franciscan Studies in Assisi, gave a presentation on the work of the Society.

Then, the Secretaries of each of the Conferences gave reports, evaluating and giving feedback, on the just-concluded 38th Assembly. Next, an economic report was given by the Secretary of the Union, Friar Paolo Fiasconaro.

The region chosen for the next Assembly of the Union in 2015 is Veneto. The favorite topic is the Year of Consecrated Life (November 30, 2014 - February 2, 2016).

Finally, the presidency passed from Friar Francesco Colacelli, the President of the CIMPCap Conference to Friar Alessio Maglione, President of ConfiTor Conference.
With a fraternal spirit, the new Mexican Province of “Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe” hosted the annual general assembly of the FALC (Federación Conventuales America Latina).

It was held at the “María Inmaculada” friary in Cuautitlan Izcalli (Mexico City) on January 12-19, 2014.

The Ministers Provincial, Custodes and Delegates of the Latin American jurisdictions and the Assistant General, Friar Jorge Fernández, all gathered together in a truly fraternal climate.

Along with the Minister Provincial of Gdansk, Friar Jan Maciejowski, there were a number of first-time participants; various superiors who were elected in the recent Provincial and Custodial Chapters: Friar Francisco Díaz, the Minister Provincial of Mexico; Friar Ronald Armijo, the Provincial Custos of Bolivia; and Friar Gilson Nunes, the Minister Provincial of the Province of Brazil-Sao Paulo.

To Friars José Luis Solís Alcántara, Geraldo Monteiro and Antonio Pytlik go all our love and gratitude for their service and for their presence in the FALC.

Friar Jhon Jairo, the Custos of Colombia, was elected Vice President of the FALC, an office which had been vacant for some time.

The visit made by Friar Mauro Gambetti, the Custos of Assisi, was particularly meaningful and appreciated. He helped us to understand the reality of the Custody of Assisi in a clear and open dialogue that spoke of our expectations and the needs of the Sacred Convent.

The Assembly began with a theme for reflection proposed by the President, Friar Carlos Trovarelli. He borrowed this reflection from Friar Gianni Cappelletto during the meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences last June in Rome and invited us to reflect on “The Service of Authority, the Commitment of Leadership and the Six-Year Plan of the Order.”
The Assembly also dealt with the related issues of initial and ongoing formation. The emphasis was on the progress made so far regarding the development of the common novitiate for northern and southern Brazil.

There are still some difficulties related to economics, cultural diversity and the academic calendar, but dialogue and communication remain open between the different jurisdictions as they continue on this path in accordance with the directions of Order.

Regarding ongoing formation, the importance of leadership in our jurisdictions was highlighted, especially as it related to guardians.

The Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the Mi.Re.Falc (Ministry of Reflection on the FALC) as a tool for reflection on our charism and the Conventual Franciscan presence in Latin America and it identified specific tasks for that ministry.

Another topic taken up at our meeting was “Solidarity and Transparency”. Reflections on this began in the previous Assembly and continued in various other meetings.

The financial balance sheet was examined and the Federation’s new treasurer was elected, Friar Grevin Sierra, the Custos of Central America.

Various other topics were dealt with such as the Renewal of the Statutes of the FALC, the M.I., the Revision of the Constitutions, the Rivo Torto course and other issues related to the General Chapter of 2013. Finally, we discussed the path of unification in Central America between the Delegation of “Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles” of Costa Rica and the Custody “María Madre de los Pobres”.

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**New Course for FALC Formators**

Friar Carlos A. Trovarelli / red. rb / trad. mf

From January 26 to February 16, 2014, a course was held for new formators in the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC).

It took place at the “Catalina de María” retreat house in Villa Allende, Córdoba (Argentina).

The course began with a slogan: “Formation: A Matter of Heart”. 22 friars from 11 countries and 13 jurisdictions participated. The course provided theoretical and practical elements aimed at improving the vocational guidance skills of the friars being trained.

The issues addressed were looked at from various perspectives: physical, physiological-psychological-behavioral and spiritual-Franciscan, with the goal of nourishing evangelical life and humanizing the formation process.

In order to understand the complexity of what it actually takes to be a Franciscan formator in Latin America, the nine-week course has been divided into three, three-week sessions. A single section is offered, once per year, over three years, from 2014 to 2016. The course method is intensive, with communal living, lectures, group work and collective processing.

“Being Consecrated Disciples and Missionaries in the Church” and “Being Trained to Guide the Journey of a Disciple” are two other topics being covered.

Shared formation programs (inter-jurisdictional and intercultural houses) are among the challenges and objectives of the Federation that the new formators are beginning to tackle.

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The participants
A Latin American Friary

“The participants / red. rb / trad. mf

“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love endures forever” (Ps 118).
This has been the experience of some Conventual friars in Córdoba, Argentina.

It’s a rule of good manners to be grateful, and precisely for this reason, as we conclude
our formation workshop for formators, the first big feeling that wells up from the depths of
our heart is deep and sincere thanks to God, for life and for all the confreres who have made
this shared experience of fraternity and education possible. It is hard to summarize in a short
article all the accumulated experience and knowledge we have gained in these three weeks of
our fraternal-formation training. However, we believe that all we have experienced and shared
can be summed up in three words, which we repeated many times during our reflections, and
which identify what we feel and what we want to say: “Latin American Friary.”

How can we respond to the realities of today which are so complex and for which future
Franciscans will require guidance? This has been a constant question on our daily journey of
reflection. It must be said that it arose not from simple communication of content but rather
from our shared experiences in an environment of communal reflection.

We had the opportunity to work in small groups in order to study documents, prepare lit-
urgies, organize recreation, holidays and even wash dishes—very simple things. In short, this
gave us the opportunity to share life and overcome several linguistic and cultural limitations.
We have all been the witnesses and protagonists of a fraternal reality built together in a natural
way, day by day.

Truly, it was a time of intense fraternal life, formation, interculturality, as well as a good
opportunity to dream and to discern together about new horizons for our training. We under-
stand that education is a project still in progress, so we have made the commitment, full of joy
and hope, to continue on with what we started here.

Finally, we also experienced the exhortation of St. Francis who said: “And wherever the
friars might be, when they come together they treat each other like family” (RB VI, 7). In fact,
though we’re all Latinos, we realize as well that wherever we meet we’re also Franciscans. And
like St. Francis, we want to give witness of our life to each other, to always build it and raise it
up in an evangelical and fraternal way.

Córdoba, Argentina, January 26 to February 16, 2014.
Meeting of the Guardians in Brazil

Friar Rogério Xavier / red. rb / trad. mf

From February 24-27, 2014, a meeting of the guardians of the Brazilian Province of St. Francis of Assisi was held at the Friary Senhor do Bonfim (Santo André-SP-Brazil).

The meeting had as its theme: “Human Relations in Fraternal Life and the Exercise of Authority”. It was led by psychologist Friar Fernando Araújo, OFM.

Solemn Profession in Rio de Janeiro

Friar Justin Biase / red. rb / trad. mf

On Saturday, February 8, 2014, five friars of the Custody of the Immaculate Conception, Rio de Janeiro professed their solemn vows.

They were: Friar Fábio Soares DA SILVA, Friar Leonardo Rodrigues DE VALENÇA, Friar Marcelo dos Santos SILVA, Friar Michel Alves DOS SANTOS and Friar Paulo Fernando VICENTE.
Some 1,000 people filled the newly completed Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Araruma, Brazil for the occasion. Fifteen buses arrived with parishioners, family and friends, some from our own Franciscan parishes, others from the home parishes of the newly-professed. Friars from Brasilia and Maranhao, as well as many religious and diocesan clergy, also joined the friars of the Custody for the celebration.

The Custos, Friar Antonio Molisani, presided and preached at the liturgy; Friar Justin Biase, the Minister Provincial, received the vows of the friars.

The liturgy was excellent and spirit-filled thanks to the enthusiasm of everyone present as well as the moving music and singing.

Mass ended with a beautiful tribute to the Immaculate Conception, the Patroness of the Custody. With the temperature hovering around 100 degrees, we were all very grateful that the new church was air-conditioned! We offer our congratulations (PARABENS!) to our brothers, Fabio, Leonardo, Marcelo, Michel and Paulo and pray that their presence will continue to enrich the fraternal and ministerial life within the Custody and the local Church. All five friars have completed their theological studies and have been assigned to local communities. Plans are now being discussed for their diaconal ordinations in a few months, followed by priestly ordination in late 2014 or early 2015. “Mais uma vez, parabens!”

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**Fraterna Visit to Guatemala**

Friar Jorge R. Fernández / red. rb / trad. mf

Between Sunday and Thursday, March 2-6, the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC), Friar Jorge Fernández, visited our two friars in Guatemala, Marcio Matute and Marcos Quesada.

They live and work at the rectoral church of St. Francis in the heart of Guatemala City. This presence was founded in July of 2012 and it was the first time that friars of the FALC had started a mission in a Latin American country where they had never been before. It’s also worth mentioning that it was founded as a joint effort between two Central American entities currently pursuing a process of unification (the Central America Provincial Custody of Mary Mother of the Poor of Honduras and the Provincial Delegation of Costa Rica).

Our two brothers are doing well, they work a lot and are appreciated by the local clergy, the Franciscan family and lay Christians. We shared some nice, fraternal days and also celebrated Ash Wednesday together. Our friars celebrated six Masses at the church that day.

May the Lord bless this new growth of our Order in Guatemala!
Fraternus Nuntius

Fraternus Visit to Peru

Friar Jorge R. Fernández / red. rb / trad. mf

From March 6 -14, 2014, Friar Jorge Fernández, the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC), made a fraternal visit to the General Provincial Delegation of Peru of the Polish Province of Cracow.

Friar Jorge visited the friaries in Lima, Chimbote and Pariacoto, as well as filial house in Lima. Almost all the friars took the opportunity to have some personal dialogue with the Assistant General and to share a bit of their lives and of the journey of the delegation thus far, including the joys and sorrows that come with picking up one's cross every day and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

On Monday, March 10, Friar Jorge and the Provincial Delegate, Friar Jacek Lisowski, took part in a Eucharistic celebration inaugurating the academic year of the Archdiocesan Seminary of Trujillo. The seminary brings together students and seminarians from six different congregations and dioceses.

At Pariacoto, the Assistant General visited the place where our friars Michał Tomaszek and Zbigniew Strzałkowski were murdered. Then, together with the friars and postulants who live there currently, he shared prayer for the upcoming beatification of our dear brothers.

The Delegation of Peru currently has eight young friars in formation (two postulants, a novice and five post-novitiate friars).

Let us pray for our confreres who walk sowing the seeds our Conventual Franciscan charism in Peru, that their effort may yield much good fruit for the people of God and for our Order.

Deus Caritas Est!
Postulancy Program Starts in Colombia


They came from different regions of the country, their ages ranging between 17 and 23 years old. The Provincial Custos, Fr. John Jairo Molina, presided over the Eucharistic celebration and officially welcomed the young postulants, giving them each a Tau.

And so their two-year postulancy experience at the St. Maximilian Kolbe Seminary has begun.

He started his visit at the friary in Asunción, which is dedicated to the Annunciation and for which Tuesday, March 25th was a day of celebration. Archbishop Edmundo Valenzuela, presided over the Holy Mass which was attended by the friars of all three friaries of the Delegation, some priests, friends and many lay people.

On Wednesday, March 26th, there was a general strike across the country; yet the brothers still managed to gather in Guarambaré for a day of reflection and fraternity with the Assistant General.

In Areguá, Friar Jorge visited the common novitiate in the FALC-South, where there are currently three novices—a Chilean, a Paraguayan and a Peruvian—who are completing their novitiate year. In addition to our Sisters who are also at Areguá, there are a number of Conventual Franciscan volunteers running a social welfare center for children.

There are now eleven solemnly professed friars living and working in the Delegation—nine Poles, an Argentine and a Paraguayan. There is also a temporarily professed Paraguayan friar who is doing his year of pastoral and community experience at the convent of Areguá.

The Delegation of Paraguay currently has 12 men in formation: four postulants, a novice and seven post-novices.

May the Lord bless our OFM Conventual family in Paraguay!
Ordinations in Korea

On January 6, 2014, group Franciscan friars in Korea were ordained to the priesthood and diaconate.

In the Cathedral of Seoul, Archbishop Andrea Yom Soochong ordained two Friars Minor and a Friar Minor Capuchin to the priesthood. At the same ceremony he ordained our friars Giovanni Jongyun KIM, Stefano Dahan LEE and two other Friars Minor to the diaconate.

This was the first time since the arrival of the three Franciscan Orders in Korea that their ordinations had taken place together.

Concerning this, the three Ministers Provincial wanted to remind us that historically the Orders originate from the same roots. In fact, at the 48th Conference of the Franciscan Superiors of Korea, in April of last year, they proposed seeking union through the liturgy. So, with that in mind, they made the decision to do these ordinations together.
Meeting of the Guardians in Indonesia

On January 20-21, 2014, there was a gathering of the guardians from the communities of the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM in Indonesia.

Those present were: Friar Fransiskus Purba from the Friary of St. Joseph, Spouse of the B.V.M. in Delitua, Friar Marselinus Damanik from the Friary of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Bandar Baru; Friar Mario Lumbangaol and Friar Cornelius Adi (Vicar) from Saint Francis of Assisi Friary in Padangbulan; Friar Gabriel Benediktus from Saint Bonaventure Friary in Pematangsiantar; Friar Thomas Taragi from Saint Catherine of Sienna Friary in Tiga Juhar; Friar Laurensio Sihaloho is the guardian of the new community of St. Anthony of Padua in Tiga Dolok.

Also present were Friar Maximilianus Sembiring, the Provincial Custos and the Custodial Secretary Friar Simon Kemit. The meeting place was the “ABADI” Inn on Samosir Island, in the middle of Lake Toba – North Sumatra. The meeting was particularly aimed at a communal exploration and reflection upon the letter of the Minister General issued after the 2013 General Chapter and also the ballots for the Conventual Chapter, which were translated into Indonesian and distributed to all the friars of the Custody.

Exploration of the texts was led by Friar Francesco Mardan, the acting chairman of the Committee for Ongoing Formation. Besides studying the texts, the friars attended the complete Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Mass.

The meeting was very interesting and everyone participated actively with the sincere hope that the spirit of the General Chapter would guide in each community of the Custody along the path of fraternal life.

Solemn Profession in Korea

On February 11, 2014 in Daegu (South Korea), at the church in Wolbae, two of our confreres made their profession of perpetual vows.

They were: Friar Raphael Changsu HONG and Friar Andrea Daegeun SONG, both currently students of theology.

The Minister Provincial of Korea, Friar Jong-ill Yoon, presided over the celebration.

Other confreres were in attendance along with many diocesan priests, nuns and lay people. Although it was a weekday, members of the parish willingly came forward to set up the liturgy and prepare for the reception of guests.
Priestly Ordinations in Indonesia

On Saturday, February 15, 2014, five friars of the Custody of Mary Immaculate in Indonesia were ordained priests.

The new priests are: Friars Silverius G. Hutauruk, Antonius Arifintus Tpoe, Maksiminus Nepsa, Blasius Kiik, Longinus Judun. They were ordained by Bishop Anicetus Sinaga of Medan, at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in Simalingkar B, Medan. It is located in the territory of our Parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Padang Bulan, Medan.

Two Capuchin friars of the Province of Medan were ordained with them as well.

During the celebration, the 10th anniversary of the death of Friar Joseph Brentazzoli (†February 14, 2004) was commemorated. He was one of the three original Conventual missionaries who came to the Diocese of Medan. The ordination of the five friars was seen as fruit from the seeds of faith that were planted by Brother Joseph and his two companions, seeds that grew in their lives and Franciscan vocations. The liturgical celebration was attended by 2 bishops, 167 concelebrating priests and about 3000 of the faithful.

After the mass, the celebration continued with some leisure time: speeches from well-wishers, lunch together, dances, songs...

We trust that Brother Joseph will guide the new priests with his prayers from heaven so that they may follow Christ in their lives and missions as sons of St. Francis of Assisi.
The Order of Friars Minor Conventual now has a new presence in Calcutta, India.

The new mission, born of the Provinces of St. Paul the Apostle of Malta and St. Maximilian Kolbe of India, was inaugurated on Sunday February 2nd, 2014, during a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of the Archdiocese of Calcutta.

Present for the inauguration were the Minister General, Fr. Marco Tasca, the Assistant General for Asia, Fr. Benedict Baek, the Minister Provincial of India, Fr. Sebastian Pendanathu, friars representing both Jurisdictions, and about 130 religious who live and work within the boundaries of the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Barasat.

The celebration was simple, yet marvelous in many senses, deeply emotional and powerfully spiritual. It is a new beginning of hope and love for both the Order and the Church in Calcutta. It is a sign of hope that promises a consistent and authentic means of spreading the Word of God and giving witness of the love of Christ for his brothers and sisters, following the example set by our Seraphic Father, St. Francis.

The next day, the friars and the Minister General gathered together at the tomb of Mother Teresa to pray, celebrate, and give thanks to God Almighty for His abundant love in giving this extraordinary gift to the Order.

During the Eucharist
The Minister General in India and Sri Lanka

The visit took place from January 27 to February 8, 2014.

The Minister Provincial, Friar Marco Tasca visited the friars of India and Sri Lanka accompanied by Friar Benedict Baek, the Assistant General for the Federation of Asian Minor Conventuals (FAMC). Also present were the Minister Provincial of India, Friar Sebastian Peandanathu and two of his Definitors, Friars Manuel Manicompel and Christy Kallupalathinkal. Marking the occasion of the Minister General’s visit, the Province scheduled the blessing of the formation houses in Andra Pradesh (India) and in Katana (Sri Lanka). There was also the inauguration of the new Provincial Delegation, “St. Joseph of Cupertino”, based in Vijayarai, Eluru (India), and the opening of the “Joint Mission” at Barasat (in northern India), a collaborative effort between the Provinces of India and Malta.

Formation House in Andra Pradesh

On January 30, 2014, there was a blessing of the formation house at Vijayarai, in Andra Pradesh. The house wasn’t yet ready to receive guests, so visiting friars were accommodated at the local Capuchin seminary.

The blessing was presided over by the Most Reverend Polymeric Jaya Rao, Bishop of Eluru, with the Minister General in attendance. There were many guests, especially men and women religious, who live close to the friars. The new facility will accommodate approximately 30 candidates from the minor and major seminary combined.

Inauguration of the New Provincial Delegation

On January 30, 2014, around 1:30 p.m., the Provincial Delegation “St. Joseph of Cupertino” was inaugurated at Andra Pradesh, India. Only friars attended the event. The Minister General presided with the Minister Provincial of India. The Provincial Delegation was actually erected on September 1, 2013, but the Indian friars scheduled the inauguration to coincide with the visit of the Minister General. It was a solemn and joyous moment. The Minister Provincial of India appointed Friar Joe Palukunnel as the Delegate of the Provincial Delegation and named his two counselors; Friar Justin Koonamparayil, guardian of the Bala Yesu Franciscan Ashram and Director of the Oxford English Medium High School, and Friar Dais Theembalangattu, guardian of the St. Maximilian Franciscan Ashram.
Opening a New Mission in Northern India
The mission is a collaboration of two Provinces of the Order: Malta and India. The friars arrived in Calcutta on February 1. The Archbishop of the city, the Most Reverend Tomas D’Susa, welcomed them into his home, in the heart of Calcutta, with great fraternity.

There are five friars preparing for the mission. Two are from Malta, Friars Colin and James. The other three are from India, Friars Lawrence Poovathummootti, Mariadas Palatty and Provincial Definitor Manuel Manicompel. The Order does not yet have a stable house in this place so the friars will stay temporarily at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Calcutta in Barasat.

The next day, Mass was celebrated for the inauguration of the new mission. The Archbishop of Calcutta presided along with the Minister General and the Minister Provincial of India. Also present were many of the sisters who live next to the Pastoral Center. The laity were not invited to attend the Mass.

After lunch, there was some time together with the Minister General to share experiences and hope for the new mission. It was followed by a visit to three houses that might possibly be purchased for the mission in northern India.

On the third day, a Mass was celebrated at the tomb of Mother Teresa. Afterwards, there was a visit to the clinic where the Mother Teresa’s sisters care for the sick with the help of many foreign volunteers.

The Blessing of the Minor Seminary of Katana
On February 6, 2014, at 4 p.m., at the mission in Sri Lanka, the minor seminary of St. Anthony in Katana was blessed. The inauguration was performed by Maxwell de Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo along with the Minister General. The Bishop carried with him the best wishes of the Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature of Sri Lanka, Mons. Renato Kucic. Among the many invited were diocesan priests, friars, and men and women religious. There were also neighbors from our new home and parishioners from St. Pius church well as many other guests attending this blessing. The friars and the student friars of the mission worked hard to clean, organize, prepare the liturgy, etc. It was a joyous and fraternal celebration.
Profession in the Custody of the Philippines
Friar Benedict Seung-Jae Baek / red. rb / trad. mf

This year’s celebration of the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, was particularly memorable for the friars of the Philippine Custody and the Vietnamese Mission.

They witnessed, for the first time, the common profession of solemn vows of five novices from both jurisdictions. The profession was held at the Church of St. Joseph in Tagaytay City. The Custos, Friar Victor Francis Mateo, OFM Conv., presided over the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. He received the vows of Friars Jude (Jose Jomer) M. Sandig; Maximilian (Emeterio) M. Bumacod; and Odorico (Michael) M. Laoreno from the Philippines. The homily was given by the Vicar of the Province of St. Joseph of Cupertino (California, USA), Friar Gary Klauer. He accepted the vows of Friars Joseph Vu Quoc Cuong and Joseph Le Vuong, both from Vietnam. The Delegate and guardian of the Vietnam mission, Friar Luke Vu and the Rector of the junior friars, Friar Maximilian Tuan, were also present to grace the event. It was an especially joyful day for the fourteen junior friars renewing their vows.

The common novitiate program of the Federation of Asian Minor Conventuals (FAMC), which started in the year 2010, enjoyed the participation of the Indian Province of St. Maximilian Kolbe and the Vietnamese mission. The program advanced a step further when, during the last Ordinary Custodial Chapter, the capitulars approved a motion designating St. Joseph Friary as the house for the international community of the FAMC jurisdictions.

The whole Custody is now looking forward to the realization of the FAMC inter-jurisdictional community in which novitiate formation will form an integral part. The new batch of novices is set to arrive in August of this year.
The friars of the Philippine Custody of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza gathered together last January 20-24, 2014, at the Mother Isabella House of Prayer in Tagaytay City to celebrate the final part of their Seventh Ordinary Chapter.

In attendance were thirty capitulars, among whom were: Friar Jerzy Norel, Vicar General, Friar Benedict Baek, Assistant General of the FAMC (Asian Federation of Conventual Friars) Friar Edoardo Scognamiglio, Minister Provincial of Naples and Friar Francis Victor Mateo, the Custos.

Important motions were approved during the Chapter among which were: the establishment of an international community in view of the FAMC common novitiate, missionary collaboration with the Province and Australian delegation and the economic administration of the custody.

Guardians, formators and chairmen of custodial commissions were likewise elected and letters of obedience were given to each friar at the final session of the chapter.

The custody looks forward, with God’s blessing, during this quadrennial.
On March 9-11, 2014, the Custody of St. Bonaventure (France-Belgium) celebrated its Ordinary Custodial Chapter at the Saint Maximilian friary in Lourdes.

In addition to the Custody’s resident friars, others present included the General Definitor for the Conference of Intermediterranean Ministers Provincial (CIMP), Friar Joaquin Agesta, and from the Custody’s mother province, the Minister Provincial of St. Anthony Province, Italy, Friar Giovanni Voltan with his Provincial Secretary, Friar Federico Santolin.

The climate during the celebration was serene and fraternal.

Friar François-Xavier Bustillo was re-elected Custos (3rd term). Joining his administration will be Friar Daniel-Marie Thévenet (Custodial Vicar) from the friary in Brussels, Friar Jean-François Auclair (Custodial Secretary) from the friary in Cholet, and Friar Pierre Andries (Definitor) from the friary in Tarbes.

This small Custodial presence continues its mission with enthusiasm in the noble lands of France and Belgium as it tries to live out the charism of St. Francis and his fidelity to the Gospel through a simple and joyful lifestyle.
On March 9-13, 2014, the first part of the Provincial Chapter of the Province of St. Jerome in Croatia was held at the Holy Spirit Friary in Zagreb.

All of the chosen delegates took part in the Chapter except one who couldn’t attend due to ongoing medical treatment. In addition to the delegates, others taking part in the Chapter included the Minister General, Friar Marco Tasca and the Assistant General for the Conferentia Europae Centralis (CEC), Friar Miljenko Hontić—who at the same time was also one of the capitulars.

The Chapter opened with a reflection written by a friar of the province who died recently, Spiro Marasović.

The theme was: “Authority in Religious Life” and was read by Friar Zlatko Vlahek, whom Chapter had appointed as translator for the Minister General.

As usual, the first part of the Chapter was spent evaluating the last four years. Then, in the third session, a new Minister Provincial was elected, Friar Josip Blažević, a former seminary rector and Vicar Provincial. Friar Josip was born March 16, 1969. He made his temporary profession on August 25, 1991, his solemn profession October 4, 1994 and was ordained a priest on June 29, 1996.

In the last session of the first part of the Chapter, members of the Provincial Definitory were elected: Friar Martin Jaković, Vicar Provincial; Friar Nikola Šantek, Provincial Secretary; Friars Ferdinand Ćavar, Tomislav Glavnik, and Željko Klarić, Definitors. Tomislav Glavnik was also elected Provincial Treasurer and Friar Željko Klarić, Provincial Exactor.

The entire Chapter took place in an atmosphere that was fraternal and serene.

On Thursday, March 13, the Archbishop of Zagreb, Cardinal Josip Bozanic, visited the Chapter Assembly to greet the Minister General and the friar participants.

The second part of the Chapter will begin next May 25.
Japan: Extraordinary Provincial Chapter  
--- Friar Benedict Seung-Jae Baek / red. rb / trad. mf

On the afternoon of Friday, March 7, 2014, the Province of Japan celebrated its Extraordinary Provincial Chapter.

The Minister Provincial, Friar Damian Hiromi Sakihama, presided over the Chapter which was also attended by the Assistant General for the Federation of Asian Minor Conventuals (FAMC), Friar Benedict Baek, and 13 other capitulars.

The Chapter dealt with various issues related to the Seibonokishi elementary school and the Tsubakihara middle school in Konagai. After the Second World War, the Province opened these schools to give the orphans who were with the friars the opportunity for an education. But the number of orphans has greatly diminished since then so the capitulars have questioned the future of the two schools.

The next day there was the simple profession of Friar Akira Toyama. The Mass for his profession was celebrated at 11:00 a.m. and was attended by his family, many guests who came to be with our friars and many different religious and diocesan priests. After the profession, a lunch was offered for all the attending guests.
On March 10-14, 2014, the Custody of Russia celebrated its Ordinary General Chapter at the "St. Anthony Miracle Worker" friary in St. Petersburg.

The Chapter was presided over by the Vicar General, Friar Jerzy Norel with the Assistant General for the Conferentia Europae Orientalis (CEO), Friar Jacek Ciupiński attending. On Thursday, March 13, Friar Nikolay Dubinin was reelected Custos for his third consecutive term. Friar Nikolay was born on May 27, 1973, made his temporary profession on September 8, 1995 and his solemn profession on the October 3, 1998. He was ordained a priest on June 24, 2000.

The next day, the Custodial Definitory was elected with the following results: Friar Andrei Buko (Custodial Vicar and Secretary), Friars Dariusz Harasimowicz, Stanisław Wójtowicz, Adam Novak and Michał Gruszka (Definitors). Friar Adam Novak was also elected Treasurer and Exactor of the Custody.
On March 17-20, 2014, the Ordinary Chapter of the Provincial Custody of Ghana (Italian Province of St. Anthony of Padua) was celebrated in the town of Obuasi (Ghana, Africa).

The fraternal assembly was attended by 28 friar capitulars of the Custody, together with the Minister Provincial of the Italian Province of St. Anthony of Padua, Friar Giovanni Voltan, and Assistant General for the African Federation of Conventual Friars (AFCOF), Tadeusz Świątkowski. The Provincial Treasurer, Carlo Comini, was also present.

On March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the capitulars examined the life and ministry of the Custody over the last four years. Then, on the first ballot, they elected their fourth Provincial Custos, Friar Anthony Kutiero Bezo. Friar Anthony was born in Nkwakaw (Ghana) on March 15, 1978. He professed his temporary vows on July 29, 2002, and his solemn vows on July 28, 2007. He was ordained a priest on November 1, 2008. This is the first time a Ghanaian Friar has been elected to this ministry.

The following day, three Definitors were elected: Friar Marino Albani; Friar David Marion Kwaw, Custodial Secretary and Friar Eugene Antwi-Boasiako, Custodial Vicar. The Chapter then elected a non-definitor as the Custodial Treasurer, Friar Martino Corazzin.

Our Order has been present in Ghana since 1977. The Provincial Custody, then the Province of Padua, was erected in 1994. In the last 20 years the Custody has been led by three Italian Custodes: Friars Vincenzo Marcoli, Emilio Gallo and Bortolino Maistrello.

Currently the Provincial Custody of Ghana is made up of 28 solemnly professed friars (20 Ghanaians, 6 Italians and 2 Romanians); 26 temporary professed (20 plus 6 Theology and Philosophy students), 6 novices and 14 postulants (10 in their first year and 4 in their second). The friars, distributed between 4 friaries (Takoradi, Accra, Saltpond and Sunyani), serve in the following ministries: media (publishing & printing), formation, parishes (3), education, health (commitment at national level for the eradication of leprosy) and charity towards the needy.

The second part of the Chapter, planning for the future of the Custody, will begin Tuesday, March 25, 2014.
Argentina-Uruguay: Provincial Spiritual Chapter

On March 17-21, 2014, the Province of St. Anthony of Padua in Argentina-Uruguay (Rio Plata), celebrated a Spiritual Chapter at the Friary of San Francisco in Moreno, Argentina.

The theme was: “Developing Guidelines for the Near Future of the Province”.

A Claretian religious theologian, Fernando Khun, led a day of reflection based on the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium and the Six-Year Plan of the Order.

On Wednesday, March 19th, the Feast of St. Joseph, Patron of the Order, the Chapter went on a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Luján. There, the friars had time to pray, celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation and finally celebrate the Eucharist with Friar Alejandro Ferreiros presiding.

On Thursday, March 20th, the Chapter received a visit from the local bishop, the Most Reverend Fernando Carlos Maletti. He presided over the Mass and then had breakfast with the friars.

On Friday, March 21, the Chapter went over to the Convent of Santa Chiara, in Moreno, to pray together and celebrate Mass with our Poor Clare sisters. It was a nice fraternal moment.

The Chapter reflected on various topics of today’s reality facing the Province and its prospective future: friaries, provincial works, parishes, etc. with the aim of making concrete decisions during the next Ordinary Provincial Chapter (2015).
Province of Rome (Italy): Extraordinary Chapter

Friar Marco Bellachioma / trad. mf

During the first part of its Ordinary Provincial Chapter (May 2013), the Province of Rome voted unanimously to erect the Delegation of St. Bonaventure in Brazil as a Custody.

In the following months, the Minister General, with his Definitory gave consent. On January 9th of this year the Provincial Definitory definitively approved the erection.

The Decree of the Erection was signed in Brazil on February 23, during one of the most significant visits ever made by the Minister Provincial, Friar Vittorio Trani. He was accompanied by some members of his Definitory: Friars Agostino Mallucci, Umberto Fanfarillo and Francesco Bartolucci.

The Decree stipulates that, after verifying the canonical requirements have been completed, the Erection will take effect starting July 15, 2014, the Feast of St. Bonaventure.

On March 25 of this year, the Solemnity of the Annunciation, the capitulars and the Delegate of the Minister General, Friar Vincenzo Marcoli, gathered during the Provincial Chapter to decide on some motions (future rules to add provincial statutes) regarding the newborn Custody of Brazil. Next, seeing that the second motion adopted called upon the Provincial Chapter to elect a Provincial Custos, the Capitular Friars proceeded immediately to the election of the new Custos.

Friar Clevis Mafra dos Santos, a current Delegate, was elected the first Provincial Custos of the Custody of St. Bonaventure in Brazil. He will begin his service at the third session of the Custodial Chapter. In the following days (according to the first motion passed) the Minister Provincial will declare the same day, July 15, as the birthday of the new Custody.
**Professiones temporaneae**

Prov. Brasiliensis S. Maximiliani M. Kolbe
ANDRADE Mayko Ataliba, CARVALHO FILHO João Rogério, FERNANDES Júlio César, FERREIRA SOBRINHO SEGUINDO Francisco, MENDONÇA Henrique, MOURA Thiago, SANTOS Antônio José, SANTOS Herton, SOBRINHO Israel Fernando (09.02.2013)

Prov. Iaponica
SUGAYA Angelo Custode (Jean Maria Patrick) (18.03.2013)

Prov. Indica
MELEDATHU Sonu (07.05.2013)

Cust. Prov. Indonesiae

Prov. Polonica – B.V.M. Imm.
BOGUCKI Bartosz, ŁAGODZIŃSKI Sebastian (14.09.2013)

Prov. Polonica S. Antonii (Deleg. Paraguaiana)
ARRIETA BOTERO Fabián Esteban (24.08.2013)

Cust. Prov. Colombiae
ARRIETA BOTERO Fabián Esteban (24.08.2013)

Prov. Aprutina
PETTI Fulvio (17.09.2013)

Cust. Indica
EEITHUMKAL Jobin, KARACKATTU Jija, MALAIYIL Shiban, THIRUITHEL Sinto (20.12.2013)

Cust. Prov. Polonica – S. Antonii
ANTOSZCZUK Rafał, BUNTOW Marcin, GORA Łukasz, JELINEK Marcin, MIKOSIAK Adam (19.03.2014)

Cust. Prov. Slovachiae
SUKENIK Jozef (25.03.2014)

Ordinationes diaconales

Cust. Prov. Colombiae
ARRIETA BOTERO Fabián Esteban (24.08.2013)

Prov. Aprutina
PETTI Fulvio (17.09.2013)

Cust. Indica
EEITHUMKAL Jobin, KARACKATTU Jija, MALAIYIL Shiban, THIRUITHEL Sinto (20.12.2013)

Cust. Prov. Polonica – S. Antonii
ANTOSZCZUK Rafał, BUNTOW Marcin, GORA Łukasz, JELINEK Marcin, MIKOSIAK Adam (19.03.2014)

Cust. Prov. Slovachiae
SUKENIK Jozef (25.03.2014)

Ordinationes sacerdotales

QUESADA NAVARRO Marcos Alejandro (06.04.2013)

Cust. Prov. Slovachiae
KOLLÁR Martin Mária (22.06.2013)

Prov. Neapolitana
SPORTEILLO Domenico (11.08.2013)

Cust. Prov. Indonesiana
HUTAURUK Silverius Gilbert P., JUDUNG Longinus, KIK Blasius, NEPSA Maksimus, TPOE Antonius Arifintus (15.02.2014)

Cust. Prov. Indonefiana
HUTAURUK Silverius Gilbert P., JUDUNG Longinus, KIK Blasius, NEPSA Maksimus, TPOE Antonius Arifintus (15.02.2014)

Ordinationes temporaneae

Prof. Romana (Deleg. Prov. Brasiliensis)
REMÉDIOS Roberto Honorato (14.02.2013)

Cust. Prov. Colombiae
HENRÁNDEZ BLANCO Alexander (11.03.2013)

Cust. Prov. Slovachiae
SUKENIK Jozef (05.10.2013)

Cust. prov. Philippinae
BUMACOD JR Maximilian M. (Emeterio), LAORENO Odorico (Michael A.), SANDING Jude M. (Jose Jomar) (19.03.2014)

Prov. FCA – S. Joseph Cup. (Missio Vietnamensis)
LE VIUONG Joseph M., VO QUOC VIUONG Joseph M. (19.03.2014)

Prof. Romana (Deleg. Prov. Brasiliensis)
REMÉDIOS Roberto Honorato (14.02.2013)

Cust. Prov. Colombiae
HENRÁNDEZ BLANCO Alexander (11.03.2013)

Cust. Prov. Slovachiae
SUKENIK Jozef (05.10.2013)

Cust. prov. Philippinae
BUMACOD JR Maximilian M. (Emeterio), LAORENO Odorico (Michael A.), SANDING Jude M. (Jose Jomar) (19.03.2014)

Prov. FCA – S. Joseph Cup. (Missio Vietnamensis)
LE VIUONG Joseph M., VO QUOC VIUONG Joseph M. (19.03.2014)
## DEFUNCTI (NOMEN)  
**CIRCUMSCRIPTIO**  
**LOCUS**  
**DIES**  
**AETAS**  

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### NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE GENERAL OFFICES

- Procurator General: procurator@ofmconv.net
- Postulator General: postulator@ofmconv.net
- General Archivist: archivio@ofmconv.net
- General Librarian: biblioteca@ofmconv.net
- Office of the General Treasurer: economato@ofmconv.net
- General Exactor: economatoesat@ofmconv.net
- Commentarium Ordinis: commentarium@ofmconv.net
- Office of Statistics: statistica@ofmconv.net
- Revision of the Constitutions: constitutiones@ofmconv.net
- Secretary General of the SGAM: sgam@ofmconv.net
- Secretary General of the SGF: sgf@ofmconv.net
- General Delegate for GPSC: gpsc@ofmconv.net
- General Delegate for EDI: edi@ofmconv.net
- International Assistant for the M.I.: mi@ofmconv.net
- General Assistant for the OFS: ofs@ofmconv.net
- General Assistant for the II Order: 2ordine@ofmconv.net
- General Assistant for the GPSC: gpsc@ofmconv.net
THE LETTER OF THE MINISTER GENERAL
ON THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

Prot. N. 136/14

Rome, March 19, 2014

Dear confreres,

It has been a year since the last General Chapter!

In the last twelve months many unforeseen things have happened in the Church: the resignation of Benedict XVI and the election of a new Pope who chose the name of our Seraphic Father: Francis; a Pope who, by word, by example, and by style, draws the attention of this world so in need of Christian witness, but at the same time is diffident toward those who speak about Christ without enfleshing mercy and love, challenges us friars, and all the baptized, to have the courage to go to the edges to invite all to experience the embrace of the Father in the womb of the Church; a Pope who arouses enthusiasm for new evangelization and urges service to the poorest and most needy.

We have to honestly ask ourselves, however: are we ready and willing to do that which the Lord through His Church asks us to do in the contemporary world, with all of the urgency of today? And, if we are ready and willing, do we know what to do as an Order, as a Conference or Province, Custody, Delegation or mission, as a single friary or as a single friar? In my report to the General Chapter I listed a series of problems that greatly worry me as I think about the future of our Order. Let me remind you of a few:

• A fairly high and widespread number of defections from the Order, that make us ask ourselves about the possibility of a crisis of identity;
• A temptation toward mediocrity and worldliness, with a loss among the friars of the spiritual and theological sense of their lives and their calling;
• A fraternity in which there are always less brothers and always more presbyters; where the friars find it difficult to encourage each other towards duc in altum; where fraternal correction is almost completely vanished; where the friars feel they belong more to parishes, to groups, and to digital communities than they do to the fraternity; where fraternal sharing is frequently superficial or theoretical;
• A presbyteral activism that often eclipses the contemplative aspect of our charism as well as our sense of brotherhood; an activism that does not translate into a commitment towards our cultural inheritance nor towards experiences of new forms of mission, evangelization, or presence.

Our Constitutions (n.121, §2) remind us: “The primary apostolate of the friars is to live the Gospel life among people in charity and poverty, in simplicity and humility”. Obviously this speaks to our identity as Conventual Franciscan Friars.

Already in 1992 the Extraordinary General Chapter said: “Being an efficacious presence in the Church and in the world involves a clear and active affirmation of our identity as Conventual Franciscan Friars and a commitment to make an adequate response to the needs of the Church and the challenges of society, by following in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi in solidarity with Christ, our poor brother” (Conventual Franciscan Presence and Witness toward the Year 2000, 1.1). It then quoted St. Maximilian Kolbe: “To heal the evils of our time, there is nothing more suited to our Seraphic Order than to evolve the spirit of our Father St. Francis with courage, readiness, speed, and constancy” (SK 486); this is a quote to remember as we prepare for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Militia Immaculatae (2017).

The recent General Chapter approved two motions to respond to the challenges of today:

Motion N.1: “… to continue the task of the systematic revision of the current Constitutions, focusing on Franciscan spirituality, theological developments, indications in magisterial teaching on consecrated life, and taking into account the different cultural expressions of the Order”.

Our current Constitutions date officially from 1984, but actually follow the post-conciliar draft of 1969. They guided us well in these decades, during which we lived through the tumultuous period after the Council; the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of many local churches to full participation in the universal Church; the expansion of the Order in the southern hemisphere; and unfortunately, the gradual aging and numerical diminishment of friars in much of the northern hemisphere, which has caused a re-organization of jurisdictions.

Attention to the text of the Constitutions in these years has helped to underline the importance of the invitation of St. Maximilian to “to evolve the spirit of our Father St. Francis”:

• Following the document Perfectae Caritatis n. 2 (“The renewal of the religious life includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes”), in the post-conciliar period there has been a much deeper study of Franciscan sources, which have been widely published; the fruits of this deeper knowledge barely appear in our current Constitutions;
• In the wake of Vatican Council II, and especially during the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Church has adopted an ecclesiological/theological language of communion, deeply rooted in the mystery of the Trinity and in the mystery of the Incarnate Word; a lan-
guage found in the apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (1996) but absent in our current Constitutions;

- There has been an ever-accelerating demographic change in the Order: at the time of the Council c.97% of the friars were in Europe and North America, while today that number is c.73%; a change that will probably continue, considering the low number of new friars in many countries in Europe and North America, and the promising numbers in other parts of the world, especially the southern hemisphere.

In the months following the General Chapter, the General Definitory formed a new Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC), composed of five full-time members, with a member of the General Definitory as liaison.

I take this opportunity to thank the friars who worked competently and generously in CERC in previous years. They established the foundation and then began the difficult work of revision of the Constitutions. The commissioning of studies on ourselves, our history, and our charism was particularly appreciated both within the Order and by other Orders and Religious Institutes. Those studies were published both in paper in the *Fraternus Nuntius* and in digital form on the Order’s website. Equally appreciated were the analyses of the texts of the current Constitutions and the initiatives to involve many friars by means of the preparation of guides for Conventual Chapters, the organization of presentations and various initiatives to foster information throughout the Order regarding the work in progress. Thanks!

The new CERC members represent a variety of native cultures, a richness of experience (provincial and general administration, formation, educational administration) and a combination of academic expertise (Franciscan studies, canon law, history, philosophy, Scripture, missiology). Their plan calls for weekly meetings eleven months out of the year to compare their individual studies and suggestions of new texts, in such a way as to complete two chapters of the Constitutions each year. I warmly thank these friars for their willingness, and their ministers for having released them for service to the Order.

CERC will develop background studies on selected constitutional topics (fraternity, mission, and leadership/governance of the Order) by organizing presentations and publishing the commissioned studies in the four official languages of the Order. CERC has already completed work on Chapter I. Each new chapter of the Constitutions, prepared by the Committee, will then be studied by members of the International Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions (CIRC), which represents the Conferences/Federations of the Order and which will bring to the process of revision particular themes of the diverse geographical areas where the Order is present. The draft of each chapter of the Constitutions, written by CERC and reviewed by CIRC, will then be examined and provisionally approved by the General Definitory, in preparation for the General Chapter. I take the opportunity to also thank the members of CIRC for the important contribution that they will make, often adding this task to many others that they already have.

Motion N.2 of the General Chapter of 2013 states: “In order to ‘live the Gospel’ today, as the Rule asks us to do…the commitment of the Order concerning formation in this next six year mandate shall be to grow in our charismatic identity as Friars Minor Conventual and thus contribute to our commitment to the new evangelization’: One of the primary instruments of the Six-Year Plan is the revision of the Constitutions.

Beginning in September, 2014, in two series each year (September-December and January-May), all the friars, by means of guides for Conventual Chapter, will be called upon to collaborate in the process of revision of the Constitutions. Each guide will contain numbers of the new Constitutions, to read and discuss in order to ascertain:

- If the friars spiritually find themselves in the text;
- If the text inspires the friars to a deeper configuration to Jesus Christ in the world of today;
- If the text helps the friars to feel connected to today’s world and to better respond to the challenges of new evangelization;
- If there are other things to include in the new Constitutions.

Following upon what I indicated in the letter to all the friars and ministers of October 12, 2010, I now ask each major superior to nominate, if you have not already done so, a member of the Definitory as the reference friar for your jurisdiction. The task of this friar is to: foster the sharing of information and the involvement of all the friars of the jurisdiction in the revision of the Constitutions, reminding them that such participation by means of Conventual Chapter is the continuing formation path chosen by the General Chapter; if necessary, translate the Conventual Chapter guides into the language spoken in the jurisdiction; write a synthesis (in one of the official languages of the Order) of the responses of the Conventual Chapters of the jurisdiction. The CIRC member of the Conference/Federation of the Order will then summarize these syntheses and send that summary to CERC. CERC will then examine the responses of the Conventual Chapters of the entire Order, make a final draft of the chapter of the Constitutions, and forward it to the General Definitory for examination and final approval before the Extraordinary General Chapter. The CERC Executive Secretary will be in contact with you in the coming days to compile a complete list of all the jurisdictional reference friars.

I ask each friar to fully commit to this process of reflection on our identity and formation of new Constitutions with seriousness and honesty, to help guide our Order into the future. Full and active participation of all the friars is necessary, so that our entire Order understands how to live our charism well in the contemporary world. Only the friars in differing cultural contexts can say how the charism is to be enfleshed and expressed in their respective realities. In order to fly in the stormy world of today, the Or-
der needs two wings of friars: one wing, a little older, with white feathers but full of wisdom and experience of the Lord and his holy operations, and the other wing young and strong, full of enthusiasm and courageous in carrying out God’s plan for the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

The entire process of the revision of the Constitutions can be followed on the Order’s website (www.ofmconv.net, following the link Constitutions-Revision); suggestions and comments on the process are always welcome at constitutiones@ofmconv.net.

I also remind the Ministers that the requests made of them in the letter of October 12, 2010, are still binding: “Regarding the co-participation of all the friars in the project: the General Definitory has embraced as its own some suggestions made by the International Commission to further the interest and participation of the Conferences/Federations and of the jurisdictions in the development of the revision project.

1. Each Conference and Federation, at least once a year, place on its work agenda the topic of the revision of the Constitutions, based on the proposals for reflection and study produced by the International Commission or by the Executive Committee;

2. Each Jurisdiction (Provinces and Custodies) place periodically (at least once a year) the topic of the Constitutions on the agenda of their respective Definitories, based on the proposals produced by the International Commission or by the Executive Committee;

3. Each Jurisdiction is to name a Definitor, (preferably the friar responsible for continuing formation) as direct reference friar with whom the Commission or the Executive Committee may communicate, and who is, in his own Definitory and jurisdiction, the reference friar who guides the friars in their participation in the work of revision and in their continuing formation on the topic of the Constitutions;

4. Each Jurisdiction and each Conference/Federation, at least once a year, place on the agenda of guardians’ meetings and of other work-groups or commissions the topic of the revision of the Constitutions based on the periodic communications to the jurisdictions and to the Conferences and Federations by the International Commission or by the Executive Committee”.

My expectation, shared by the General Definitory and in the spirit and the letter from the General Chapter, is that this daunting task of the systematic revision of the Constitutions might also be a fruitful moment of revision, of a re-launching of our identity, of our charism, taking flesh in the life of each of us, of our communities and of our Provinces.

May the Virgin Mother and our saints accompany us along this path, and may the example and the directions of Pope Francis and the Ordinaries of the local churches in which we live guide us in the ‘jumpstart’ of the Gospel that the Church is asking of us.

Fraternally,

Friar Marco Tasca, Minister General

**PROJECT FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS 2013-2019 SESSENNIUM**

**Motion N. 1 of the General Chapter of 2013 states:**

- Continue the work of the systematic revision of the current Constitutions, keeping in mind Franciscan spirituality, developments in theology and magisterial ecclesial teaching on the consecrated life, and consonant with the differing cultural realities of the Order.
- Begin the process of the revision of the General Statutes.
- Review the composition of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC), such that it be composed of at least four members full-time, at least one of whom is an expert in canon law.
- Considering the progress of the work of revision, possibly convocate an extraordinary General Chapter to evaluate the work and approve the text.

**Motion N. 1** further suggests that the Minister General with his Definitory modify the composition of the International Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions (CIRC), which is to be composed of seven members, each of whom is a representative of one of the Conferences or Federations of the Order. The CERC coordinator is to be the CIRC President. That Commission is to collaborate with CERC in the drafting of the texts, especially attentive to themes of particular importance for the diverse geographical areas in which the Order is present. In addition, the CIRC commission is to collaborate with the jurisdictional point friars and with their conferences or federations to share information and promote the involvement of the friars in the revision of the Constitutions.

**Motion N. 2** states that the priority of the Order in this sessemmium regarding formation is to grow in the understanding of our charismatic identity as Friars Minor Conventual and thus contribute to the new evangelization. One of the privileged instruments of the Six-Year Plan is to be the revision of the Constitutions.

The new CERC is made up of six members, five full-time (Valentin Redondo, Timothy Kulbicki, Bernardo Commodi, Victor Mora Mesén, Zbigniew Kopeć) and one member of the General Definitory (Vincenzo Marcoli) as liaison with the government of the Order. These members represent a variety of cultural origins; rich experience (roles at both the provincial and general level, formation, the world of education); and a variety of academic expertise (Franciscanism, canon law, history, philosophy, Scripture, missiology). The plan is to meet at least weekly for eleven months of the year, in order to complete approximately two chapters of the Constitutions every year.
The new CIRC will be made up of ten members: seven representatives of the Conferences and Federations of the Order, the CIRC Coordinator as president, and two general appointments. The representatives of the Conferences and Federations should be friars willing to, and capable of, critically examining the constitutional texts produced by CERC; able to come to Rome twice a year for meetings with special attention to themes of particular importance for the diverse geographical areas of the Order; serve as a link to the Conference or Federation President for the animation of the friars.

**CERC HAS PLANNED ITS WORK IN THIS WAY:**

I. The themes of each chapter of the Constitutions will be developed in papers delivered at annual conferences at the Seraphicum and then published in the four official languages of the Order. Some of this has already been done by the preceding CERC, which helps in the current CERC’s task.

II. The constitutional texts will be drafted number by number and formatted so that the friars can easily see both the changes and the motives behind the changes, in line with these criteria:
   a. To better respond to developments in contemporary Franciscanism;
   b. To better respond to the developments in magisterial ecclesial teaching especially regarding consecrated life;
   c. To use clear, direct, and easily translated language (constructing as they go a type of glossary to better understand the fundamental concepts in Italian [the working language] to make the translation into the other official languages of the Order and into Latin easier).

III. Following the completion of a draft of a chapter of the Constitutions, CERC will do a second read and edit, as needed, in line with these criteria:
   a. To take proper account of the differing cultural realities of the Order;
   b. To pinpoint material better suited for the General Statutes;
   c. To close any gaps;
   d. To highlight the primacy of the „Most High, all-powerful, good Lord” (Canticle of the Creatures, 1) as a unifying concept of all the chapters of the Constitutions.

IV. This first draft of a chapter of the Constitutions prepared by CERC and then reviewed by CIRC will be sent to the General Definitory for its approval.

V. So that the work of the revision of the Constitutions becomes a common moment of continuing formation, CERC, in collaboration with the Coordinating Committee for the Six-Year Plan (CCPS), will prepare guides for conventual chapter discussion, the content of which will be the drafts of the various chapters of the Constitutions. The plans are for two series per year of three guides each.

VI. A report of the conventual chapter minutes regarding the revision of the Constitutions will then be sent to the point friar of each jurisdiction, whose task is to:
   i. Share information and promote the involvement of the friars in the revision of the Constitutions;
   ii. Quickly translate if necessary the guides for the conventual chapter into the spoken language of the jurisdiction;
   iii. Synthesize (in one of the official languages of the Order) the response of the conventual chapters of the jurisdiction, and forward that synthesis to the CIRC member of the Conference or Federation of the Order.

VII. The CIRC member of the Conference or Federation of the Order will then summarize the syntheses of the point friars of the jurisdictions and forward that summary to CERC.

VIII. After examining these responses, CERC will make a final revision to the draft chapter of the Constitutions, and then present it to the General Definitory for its examination and approval for the agenda of the General Chapter.

IX. The General Chapter will examine and approve a final text of the Constitutions, which will enter into force following the approval of the Holy See.

X. Ongoing with the revision of the Constitutions, CERC will be gathering material for the General Statutes, and together with CIRC will prepare a draft of them as well. The process of their drafting and editing will be similar to the process used for the Constitutions.

*Trans: Friar Timothy KULBICKI, OFMConv*
### CONSPECTUS GENERALIS ORDINIS

**Die 31 decembris 2013**

#### Statistica@ofmconv.net

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| AMERICAE - S. Bonav.   | 2 37 2 1 1 21 2 | 4 1 | 71 1 |
| AMERICAE - S. Joseph C. | 38 10 12 | 11 | 2 73 |
| cust. Anglo-Hibernica   | 22 2 2 2 | 5 1 3 | 37 37 |
| cust. Canadiensis       | 13 2 1 1 | 13 -2 |
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| GERMANIAE | 34 2 2 | 8 2 1 | 49 |
| NEDERLANDIENS | 20 1 1 | 21 3 |
| SLOVENIAE | 37 3 1 | 3 1 | 45 -1 |
| cust. Austro-Helvetica | 25 1 1 | 1 | 27 7 |
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| POLONIAE - B.V.M. Imm. | 2 220 4 7 105 20 1 | 13 5 9 | 386 -7 |
| POLONIAE - S. Max. Kolbe | 134 2 1 1 18 3 2 | 10 1 2 | 174 -7 |
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#### Diff. 2012

|                | #ADR! | 53 | -5 | -72 | -27 | 2 | -81 | -3 | 9 | -119 |

#### Summa totalis professorum

|                | 3602 | 453 | 4055 | Tot. |

#### Diff. proff. 2012

|                | -46 | -82 | -124 |

* huius circumscriptionis numeri quod recentiores desunt aestimatione nituntur.

N.B. Delegationum provincialium frates in eiusdem provinciae numero habentur.

The figures also include friars according to the Jurisdiction in which they exercise their rights (Prov./Cust.), as well as those the friars who are affiliated “ad tempus”.

Irregular: all solemnly professed who are unlawfully absent from their religious houses. (can. 665 §2). Extra claustra: the heading includes all exclaustrated solemnly professed. (can. 686 § 1, can. 693) and also those who, having concluded the period of exclaustration, are illegitimately absent from their religious houses. None of these friars have active or passive voice.
### MUTATIONES IN PROVINCIIS ANNO 2013

**Die 31 decembris 2013**

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#### NEDERLANDIENSIS
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#### SLOVENIAE
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#### POLONIAE - Immaculatae
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#### POLONIAE - S. Max. Kolbe
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#### SARDINIAE
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#### SICILIAE
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#### TUSCIAE
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#### UMBRIAE
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#### HISPANIÆ
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#### MELITENSIS
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#### ROMANIAE
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#### CUST. P. ORIENTIS-TERRAE S.
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#### BRASILIENSIS – S. Max. K.
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#### RIOPLATENSIS
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- 2 1 1

#### CUST. PR. BRASILIENSIS – IMM.
- 1

#### CUST. PR. COLOMBIAE
- 1 1

#### CUST. PR. VENETIOLE
- 2 1 1 2 1

#### SUMMA FALC
- 3 14 16 3 6 6 1 12 1 1 1

#### COREAE
- 2 3

#### IAPONIAE
- 1

#### INDIAE
- 6 10 4 5

#### CUST. PR. INDONESIAE
- 12 9 7 4 4

#### CUST. PR. PHILIPPINARUM
- 3 4 1 1 2

#### SUMMA FAMC
- 23 24 10 4 4

#### SUMMA TOTALIS
- 25 1 117 1 104 4 51 6 54 59 18 3 7 36 1 6 9 4 1 51 12