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MINISTER GENERAL

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Friar Marco TASCA



Calendar of the Minister General

OCTOBER

- 1-2: Argentario (Italy): Meeting with the members of the General Offices
- 3-4: Assisi: Celebrations in honor of our Seraphic Father St. Francis
- 4-8: La Verna: Spiritual retreat with the Ministers General and General Definitors of the three Franciscan families
- 9: Assisi: General Assembly of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi
- 10-14: Rome: Session of the General Definitory
- 16-20: Rome, Seraphicum: International Kolbean Congress
- 21-23: Uganda: Blessing of the new friary in Munyonyo

NOVEMBER

- 9: Rome, Seraphicum: Mass during the OFS General Chapter
- 20-21: Rome, Seraphicum: Sacred Art and New Evangelization Conference
- 27-

DECEMBER

- 7: Rome: Session of the General Definitory
- 8: Rome, Twelve Holy Apostles: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- 9-15: Costa Rica: First Custodial Chapter of the Custody of Central America
- 25: Rome, Twelve Holy Apostles: Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Friar Vincenzo MARCOLI
Secretary General



Session September 30 and October 9-13, 2017

During the first part of its session held September 30, at the Maria Consolatrice Retreat Center in Santa Marinella, Rome, and the remainder of the meeting at the friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome, the General Definitory:

- approved the minutes of the meeting held August 29 - September 1, 2017;
- approved a settlement on a dispute with the Municipality of Rome;
- approved the hiring of an employee of the General Curia;

GENERAL DEFINITORY

- listened to and commented on the reports of:
 - the General Visitor, Friar Carlos TROVARELLI, at the end of his general canonical visitation to the Provincial Custody of St. Francis in Colombia;
 - the General Visitor, Friar Benedict BAEK, at the end of his general canonical visitation to the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza in the Philippines;
 - the General Visitor, Friar Jude WINKLER, at the end of his general canonical visitation to the USA Province of Our Lady of Consolation;
 - the General Visitor, Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI, at the end of his general canonical visitation to the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels;
- with Friar Valentin REDONDO, Coordinator of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) and Friar Timothy KULBICKI, CERC Secretary present, proceeded to the final definition of Chapters III and IV of the Constitutions to be presented to the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter;
- with all of the members of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) present: CERC Coordinator Friar Valentin REDONDO; CERC Secretary Friar Timothy KULBICKI; and Friars Victor MORA and Zbigniew KOPEĆ, assessed the progress made so far in organizing the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter;
- listened to reports of visits made by the Assistants General to various Jurisdictions:
 - from the Assistant General for the AFCOF, Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI, on the occasion of:
 - the Custodial Chapter of the Provincial Custody of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Tanzania (September 4-14, 2017);
 - from the Assistant General for the CEF, Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, on the occasion of:
 - his fraternal visit to the friars in Copenhagen, Denmark and the mission in Jönköping, Sweden (September 3-8, 2017);
 - the General Assembly of the Provincial Delegation of Holland, in Denekamp, Holland, (September 10-13, 2017);
 - the Assembly of the Militia of the Immaculate of Croatia in Zagreb, Croatia, (September 23, 2017);
 - from the Assistant General for the CFF, Friar Jude WINKLER, on the occasion of:
 - the Custodial Chapter of the Provincial Custody of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa in Great Britain-Ireland (September 4-8, 2017);
 - from the Assistant General for the FEMO, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI, on the occasion of:
 - his fraternal visit to the novitiate in Smardzewice, Poland (September 16, 2017);
 - his fraternal visit on the occasion of the blessing of the new friary in Klaipėda, Lithuania (September 23, 2017);
 - his fraternal visit on the occasion of the meeting for Guardians and Directors of the Provincial works of the Province of the Immaculate Mother of God in Poland in Niepokalanów-Lasek, Poland (September 25-26, 2017);
 - from the Assistant General for the FIMP, Friar Joaquin AGESTA,
 - on the occasion of the FIMP Federation Assembly in Assisi, Italy (September 6-9, 2017);
 - on the occasion of the General Assembly of the Province of St. Paul the Apostle in Malta (September 11-13, 2017);
- suppressed the friary of St. Francis of Assisi in San Francisco, USA;
- accepted *ad experimentum* some changes to the special Statutes of the General Custody of Assisi proposed during its Custodial Chapter;
- granted approval for the erection of the Friary of St. Francis of Assisi in Xi'an, People's Republic of China;
- suppressed the friary of St. Michael in Porazava, Grodno region, Belarus;
- granted approval for the erection of the friary of St. Francis of Assisi in Kampala, Uganda;
- was updated by the Vicar General, Friar Jerzy NOREL, on the inter-Franciscan *Emmaus Project*;
- was updated by the Minister General on the inter-Franciscan *Franciscan University Project*;
- was updated on the organization of the Convention of the Militia of the Immaculate in Rome (October 16-18, 2017), and the Kolbean Congress for friars of the Order in Rome (October 19-20, 2017);

GENERAL DEFINITORY

- the Secretary General, Friar Vincenzo MARCOLI, updated the General Definitory on the Conference promoted by the Order entitled "Sacred Art and New Evangelization," in Rome (November 20-21, 2017);
- finalized the program of the meeting of the General Curia with the newly elected Ministers Provincial, Custodes and Provincial Secretaries, to be held January 14-20, 2018;
- gave some instructions regarding hospitality in some of the General Houses;
- was updated by Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ on preparations for the International Youth Toward Assisi Meeting;
- was updated on the situation regarding the novices and the novitiate house after the earthquake that struck Mexico;
- dealt with some financial issues;
- indicated the procedure to be followed for the union of the former Provincial Custody of Mary, Mother of the Poor in Central America of the USA Province of Our Lady of Consolation and the former Provincial Delegation of Costa Rica of the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels into a new Provincial Custody;
- studied a proposal to reorganize the International Franciscan Center for Dialogue (CEFID);
- planned for Pope Francis' visit/audience on November 23, 2017 with a large group of Franciscan friars;
- evaluated some changes in the composition of the General Secretariat for Formation;
- shared some opinions regarding an invitation of the St. Egidio Community presented to some General Superiors;
- established the logistics and confirmed the date for the General Definitory's spiritual retreat;
- considered some personal cases.

Session November 27–December 6, 2017

At its session held at the friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles, in Rome, the General Definitory:

- approved the minutes of the meeting of September 30 and October 9-13, 2017;
- was updated by Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ on certain difficulties concerning preparations for the International Youth Toward Assisi Meeting;
- was updated by the Assistant General for the FAMC, Friar Benedict BAEK, on the status of the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza in the Philippines;
- was updated by the Vicar General, Friar Jerzy NOREL, on certain aspects of hospitality in some of the General Houses;
- appointed Friar Franklin DURAN Vice-Secretary of the General Secretariat for Formation to replace Friar Giulio CESAREO;
- appointed Friar Emanuele RIMOLI a member of the General Secretariat for Formation;
- with Friar Valentin REDONDO, Coordinator of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) and Friar Timothy KULBICKI, CERC Secretary present, proceeded to the final definition of Chapters V and VI of the Constitutions to be presented to the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter;
- - with all of the members of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) present: CERC Coordinator Friar Valentin REDONDO; CERC Secretary Friar Timothy KULBICKI; and Friars Victor MORA and Zbigniew KOPEĆ, assessed the progress made so far in organizing the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter;
- listened to and commented on the partial report made by the General Visitor, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI, on his general canonical visitation to the General Custody of Our Holy Father St. Francis in Russia;
- listened to reports of visits made by the Assistants General to various Jurisdictions:
 - from the Assistant General for the AFCOF, Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI, on the occasion of:
 - the AFCOF Federation Assembly and Course for Formators, held in Munyonyo, Uganda (October 23-27, 2017);

GENERAL DEFINITORY

- from the Assistant General for the CEF, Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, on the occasion of:
 - the CEF Federation Assembly, held in Vienna, Austria (November 5-9, 2017);
 - the Provincial Assembly of the Province of Croatia, held in Zagreb, Croatia (November 22, 2017);
 - the meeting between the Assistant General for the FIMP, Friar Joaquin AGESTA, and the Romanian friars residing in Germany (October 23-27, 2017);
- from the Assistant General for the CFF, Friar Jude WINKLER, on the occasion of:
 - his meeting with the Provincial Definitory of the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels, (October 31, 2017);
 - his meeting-workshop with the postulants of the Provinces of the USA, held in Chicago, Illinois, USA (November 6-10, 2017);
 - the inter-Franciscan commemoration of the Papal Bull *Ite vos* in Chicago, Illinois, USA (November 4, 2017);
 - his fraternal visit to the Community in Ottawa, Canada (November 20-22, 2017);
 - the CFF Federation Assembly in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA (November 22-26, 2017);
- from the Assistant General for the FALC, Friar Carlos TROVARELLI, on the occasion of:
 - the formation week of the Provincial Delegation in Chile, held in Santiago, Chile (September 4-8, 2017);
 - the Provincial Chapter of the Province of St. Francis in Brazil, held in Curitiba, Brazil (September 18-22, 2017);
 - his meeting with the "Unified Definitory" (the Provincial Custody of Mary, Mother of the Poor in Central America and the Provincial Delegation of Costa Rica of the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels) in San Salvador, El Salvador (September 26-28, 2017);
 - the Extraordinary Provincial Chapter of the "Rioplataense" Province of St. Anthony of Padua in Argentina-Uruguay, held in Moreno, Argentina (October 11-12, 2017);
 - the Extraordinary Provincial Chapter of the Province of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Brazil, held in Brasilia, Brazil (October 23-27, 2017);
 - his fraternal visit to the Provincial Custody of Our Lady of Coromoto in Venezuela (October 28–November 1, 2017);
 - the Custodial Chapter of the Provincial Custody of St. Francis in Colombia, held in Bogotá, Colombia (November 7-10, 2017);
 - the Custodial Chapter of the Provincial Custody of St. Francis in Bolivia, held in Cochabamba, Bolivia (November 13-17, 2017);
 - the joint meeting of representatives of the "Rioplataense" Province and Provincial Delegation of Paraguay, held in Asuncion, Paraguay (November 19-21, 2017);
- from the Assistant General for the FAMC, Friar Benedict BAEK, on the occasion of:
 - the Ordinary Custodial Chapter of the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza in the Philippines held in Paranaque, Philippines (October 23-27, 2017);
 - the FAMC Federation Assembly in Nagasaki, Japan (November 6-10, 2017);
 - the General Assembly of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. in Japan, held in Nagasaki, Japan (November 21-23, 2017);
 - the ongoing formation meeting of the Province of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Korea, held on the island of Jeju, Korea (November 20-24, 2017);
- from the Assistant General for the FEMO, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI, on the occasion of:
 - the FEMO Federation Assembly in Rakovski-Pleven, Bulgaria (October 23-27, 2017);
- from the Assistant General for the FIMP, Friar Joaquin AGESTA, on the occasion of:
 - the meeting of the General Definitory with members of the Provincial Definitory of the Province of Our Seraphic Father St. Francis in Italy (Naples);
- was updated by the Vicar General, Friar Jerzy NOREL, on the inter-Franciscan *Emmaus Project*;
- was updated on the audience granted by Pope Francis for around 400 First Order Franciscan friars (November 23, 2017);
- dealt with some financial issues;
- accepted the request of the USA Province of Our Lady of Consolation to erect the new Provincial Custody of Mary, Mother of Mercy in Central America;

- approved the transfer of two friaries and twelve friars from the Provincial Delegation of Costa Rica to the soon-to-be-erected Provincial Custody of Mary, Mother of Mercy in Central America;
- was updated on some projects of the “By Node” Association that are being studied;
- considered a proposal for collaboration between the Provinces of Germany and Romania;
- reflected on some instructions to propose to some of the Provinces that will be celebrating their next Ordinary Provincial Chapters;
- evaluated the Convention of the Militia of the Immaculate in Rome (October 16-18, 2017), and the Kolbean Congress for friars of the Order in Rome (October 19-20, 2017);
- met with Friar Silvestro BEJAN, the Delegate General for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, listened to the report on his activities and evaluated his planned activities for 2018, which involves the reorganization of CEFID;
- met with Friar Joseph BLAY, the Delegate General for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, listened to the report on his activities and evaluated his planned activities for 2018;
- met with Friar Damian PĂTRAȘCU, the Postulator General for the Causes of Saints, listened to the report on his activities and evaluated his planned activities for 2018;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Italian Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Central Italy), Friar Franco BUONAMANO and some members of his Provincial Definitory;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Nicholas and St. Angelo in Italy (Puglia), Friar Vincenzo GIANNELLI and some members of his Provincial Definitory;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Bernardine and St. Angelo in Italy (Abruzzo), Friar Franco RAPACCHIALE and some members of his Provincial Definitory;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Agatha and St. Lucy in Italy (Sicily), Friar Gaspare LA BARBERA, and some members of his Provincial Definitory;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Mother of God in Poland (Warsaw), Friar Wiesław PYZIO;
- met with the Minister Provincial of the Province of Our Lady of Montserrat in Spain, Friar Ángel Mariano GUZMAN LUDEÑA;
- was informed about some of the Franciscan family’s initiatives being studied for the 2019 World Youth Day in Panama (January 22-27, 2019);
- was informed by Friar Jude WINKLER, the Delegate of the Minister General for the Board of Directors of Franciscans International, about the recent board meeting (November 17-20, 2017);
- considered some personal cases.

The General Definitory



Towards the Franciscan University

■ Friar Tomasz SZYMCZAK, OFM Conv.

On October 2, 2017, the Ministers General of the Franciscan First Order and the Third Order Regular (TOR) met with the Franciscan University Commission at the OFM friary of St. Mary of the Angels, in Assisi.

The Ministers General - Friar Marco TASCIA, OFM Conv.; Friar Mauro JOHRI, OFM Cap.; Friar Michael PERRY, OFM; and Friar Nicholas POLICHNOWSKI, TOR - were updated on the current status of work related to the Franciscan University project.

The Commission, led by Friar Cesaro VAIANI, OFM, presented the text outlining the project and listened to comments made by the Ministers General. The academic and formative institutions of the Conventual Franciscan Order were represented by Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, the Secretary General for Formation (SGF), and Friar Dinh Anh Nhue NGUYEN, the Dean of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure.

The next meeting is scheduled for the second half of December, 2017. Meanwhile, the text outlining the project will undergo review by the professors of the Antonianum, the Seraphicum and the Capuchin Historical Institute.

La Verna: The General Definitories on Retreat

■ General Office of Communications, OFM

From October 4-8, 2017, at the Franciscan Shrine of La Verna, the General Ministers of the Franciscan First Order and the TOR, Friars Michael PERRY, OFM; Mauro JÖHRI, OFM Cap.; Marco TASCIA, OFM Conv.; and Nicholas POLICHNOWSKI, TOR; along with the friars of the General Definitories of the four families, gathered on retreat.

A few years ago, the brother Definitors of the four Franciscan Families participated in a similar experience. It was a time of grace, of listening to the word of God and prayer. This year's retreat was designed as one of the elements of the process of preparing for the anniversary of the meeting of St. Francis with the Sultan (in 2019 we will celebrate the 800th anniversary of this event). For this reason, the reflections proposed by the presenters dealt with themes of dialogue, diversity, alterity and friendship.



The participants

The Franciscan friars were led, during the first days of the retreat, by the Most Reverend Jean-Paul VESCO, OP, Bishop of Oran (Algeria). Bishop VESCO dealt with the themes of dialogue and friendship. The conference on the last day of the retreat was entrusted to the Muslim theologian, Professor Shahrzad Houshmand ZADEH. She explained some issues relating to the dialogue between Christians and Muslims, pausing at length on dogmatic and spiritual matters.

The brother Definitors left La Verna somehow changed and touched, certainly by the ideas shared by the presenters but also by cordial and generous hospitality offered by the friars who work and live at the Shrine of La Verna.

Seraphicum: Opening of the Academic Year

■ Elisabetta Lo Iacono, Head of the Seraphicum Press Office

The opening ceremony of the 114th academic year of the Seraphicum was held on Saturday, October 14, 2017.

The event took a look at the establishment of a single Franciscan university and confirmed the fundamental role of a theological faculty in today's cultural context.

As is traditional, the day began with Mass in the chapel of St. Bonaventure, presided over by Friar Marco TASCA, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual and Grand Chancellor of the Faculty. Among those present were professors, students, and members of the General Definitory of the Order. Other participants included Professor Mauro MANTOVANI, Rector of the Salesian Pontifical University and Professor Giuseppe BUFFON, the new Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical University Antonianum.

At the beginning of the celebration, the Dean of the Seraphicum, Friar Dinh Anh Nhue NGUYEN, made some opening remarks and emphasized how this event is "a decisive step on the way towards a Franciscan University." He thanked the Grand Chancellor for his "fraternal care and thoughtfulness, in being with us at this important moment for the Faculty." Dean NGUYEN added: "We can only express gratitude to God that we have been called to do academic and cultural work in the Lord's vineyard."

In his homily, Minister General Marco TASCA referred to gifts and daily responsibility. He pointed out that today's Gospel reading closed with the verb 'to observe,' understood in the sense of 'to respect.' "Our wish," Friar Marco emphasized, "is that the Lord grants us the grace to know how to respect the gifts he gives us every day: to respect what we learn, to respect the gift of fraternal life, the gift of family life, the gift of study."

The academic event was an opportunity for the Dean to mention some of this year's news, such as the promotion of various professors, the collaboration with the Antonianum, which – in view of the Franciscan University – has led to an intensification in the exchange of professors, gratitude for the gift of the new students and the initiatives planned for the new academic year. He also expressed, on behalf of the entire academic community, best wishes and good luck to Friar Giulio CESAREO, currently a professor of moral theology who has just been made the new executive editor of the publishing house Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Friar Juan Miguel VICENTE, Secretary of the Faculty, then introduced Friar Stéphane OPPES, OFM, who delivered the opening address. His chosen theme was, in keeping with earlier presentations made in recent months by Friar Pietro MARANESI, OFM Cap., and Friar Orlando TO-DISCO, OFM Conv., centered on St. Bonaventure – the Patron Saint of the Faculty – on the occasion of the celebration of the 800th anniversary of his birth. The celebration will culminate on November 15-17, with an international congress on the theology of the Seraphic Doctor and its relevance today.

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Rome: Conventual Franciscan Becomes LEV Executive Editor

■ General Secretariat

A Conventual Franciscan theologian has become the new executive editor of the publishing house Libreria Editrice Vaticana (LEV).

Friar Giulio CESAREO, 39, is a professor of moral theology at the Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure (Seraphicum) in Rome.

Vatican Radio announced a curious detail: Friar Giulio starts work on October 13, but he is currently in Frankfurt, Germany, where LEV is participating in the Buchmesse, Europe's most prestigious book fair.

"LEV is very well received here," said Friar Giulio. He pointed out that "many foreign publishers are interested in the book series that we are launching about the roots of Pope Francis' theological thinking. It is a book series written by a wide range of ecclesial authors - to be precise - that will be distributed in bookstores starting at Christmas."

"The great opportunity and responsibility that comes with communicating faith in this context is to help people see God's presence and God's love in everyday life. This is a great service that religious publishing can offer society."

Thus, a Conventual Franciscan will now take up the glorious legacy left by the Salesian Giuseppe COSTA. Father Giuseppe returned to Sicily to serve as the superintendent of schools for his Congregation on the island.

Friar Giulio was born in Chivasso, Torino Province, Italy, in 1978. He studied moral theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and then obtained his doctorate at the University of Freiburg in Switzerland. His doctoral thesis was on the theology of peace and war. In addition to teaching moral theology at the Seraphicum, he has been teaching at the Aletti Center's Atelier of Theology for a number of years.



Friar Giulio CESAREO

Padua: Entry of the Pontifical Delegate

■ From the press release by Alessandra SGARBOSSA - St. Anthony Messenger

On Sunday, October 22, 2017, the Most Reverend Fabio DAL CIN, Prelate of Loreto, Italy, made his official entrance as the Pontifical Delegate to the Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua.

Archbishop DAL CIN presided over Mass at 11:00 a.m., in front of a grateful crowd of supporters. He offered a votive lamp to the relics of St. Anthony, asking the saint to intercede for him and support him in his service. While doing this, he also made the pilgrims' gesture of laying his hand upon the stone of the tomb.

In his homily, Archbishop DAL CIN mentioned World Mission Day and pointed to St. Anthony as a model of proclaiming the Gospel. He stated that the saint's wisdom and closeness to the poor must be a stimulus for the testimony of all believers, especially those serving at the Shrine.

Finally, the new Delegate thanked all those present, including the Most Reverend Claudio CIPOLLA, Bishop of Padua, who concelebrated the Mass; the community of the Friars Minor Conventual, the Confraternities of the Basilica's Orders of Knighthood, and various civil, academic and military authorities, including the Mayor of Padua, Sergio GIORDANI and the Prefect, Renato FRANCESCHELLI.

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New Translators at the General Curia

■ The General Secretariat

After a long wait, the General Secretariat finally has a complete group of translators.

Friar Aurelio ERCOLI is from the Italian Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Central Italy). He has been a member of the General Curia community since October 10, 2017. He is now responsible for translations in Italian and for doing editorial work on texts for the website of the Order and the *Fraternus Nuntius* newsletter.

Friar Aurelio was born in Macerata, Italy, on March 21, 1965. He professed his temporary vows on August 28, 1991, his solemn vows on October 1, 1995, and was ordained a priest on September 27, 1997.

Friar Roberto BRANDINELLI, from the Italian Province of St. Anthony of Padua (Northern Italy) was previously in charge of this task and carried it out for a number of years. However, he was recently elected to serve as the Vicar Provincial of his Province.

Friar Alejandro PALACIOS VÁZQUEZ is from the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. He has been a member of the General Curia community since August 8, 2017. He is now responsible for translations in Spanish.

Friar Alejandro was born in Acapulco, Mexico, on January 25, 1978. He professed his temporary vows on August 8, 1998, his solemn vows on January 17, 2006, and was ordained a priest on September 22, 2007.

Friar Alejandro replaces Friar Indalecio MÍNGUEZ GONZÁLEZ from the Province of Our Lady of Montserrat in Spain, who carried out this task for several years.

We wish the new collaborators success in their work for the good of the entire Order.



Friar Aurelio ERCOLI



Friar Alejandro PALACIOS VÁZQUEZ

Rome: Meeting with Cardinal STELLA

■ Friar Raffaele MEMMO

On Friday, November 3, 2017, friars from two of the Conventual Franciscan communities in Rome, the Seraphicum International College and the friary of St. Anthony at the Baths ("La Vigna"), had the honor and the joy of meeting His Eminence Beniamino Cardinal STELLA, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy.

The meeting took place at 5:30 p.m. in the Sisto V Hall of the Seraphicum College. It was focused on presenting the *Ratio Studiorum* for the formation of the clergy: "The Gift of the Priestly Vocation". Fidelity and perseverance in ministry were also discussed.

The Cardinal presented the key elements of the document, in particular, the formation of candidates for the priesthood. This is seen as a work in progress which the Lord continues throughout the life of those in formation, just as a potter does with his clay. A person being formed is called to undertake an integral development of himself, encompassing the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral elements, as a true disciple of the Lord, knowing that his journey never finishes, but always continues.

Cardinal STELLA continued to outline who a formator is. He is not someone who works in isolation but rather, he is someone who collaborates, someone who must himself be formed for the delicate task he is to carry out. He is someone who never sees the vocations entrusted to him as empty boxes to be filled with certain content. Instead, he sees them as plants under his care, whose growth he nurtures. The Cardinal's opening remarks were memorable: "If each of us remains faithful to the intentions and the loving enthusiasm we had in the seminary, or during our novitiate, we will have already secured a great deal of what is needed for our ministry.

In the concluding part of his address, the Cardinal indicated some reasons that lead to abandoning the ordained ministry. He noted that most of the time, the signs of crisis are already visible during the years of initial formation. The meeting ended with the celebration of Mass in the St. Bonaventure Chapel.

2016 New Issue of *Commentarium Ordinis*

■ Friar Robert LEŻOHUPSKI, Editor in Chief of *Commentarium Ordinis*

Dear brothers, we invite you to read the latest issue of *Commentarium Ordinis* which covers the period of January to December, 2016.

Following the decision of the General Definitory, this 2016 edition of *Commentarium Ordinis* is the start of a new approach for this publication. We should mention that at present, the General Curia has three media outlets: *Commentarium Ordinis*, *Fraternus Nuntius* and the Order's website.

Commentarium Ordinis can now be characterized as a collection of written works compiled for the purpose of historical documentation, not news. News items, instead, are relayed to the Order's Website (current news) and *Fraternus Nuntius* (quarterly news). Only one issue of *Commentarium Ordinis* is published per year. A special issue is published for the celebration of General Chapters or Extraordinary Assemblies of the Order. A limited number of copies are printed and sent to all the Provincial and Custodial headquarters, Provincial Delegations, and the principal libraries of each Jurisdiction.

All *Commentarium Ordinis* issues, past and present, are available and downloadable in PDF format on the Order's website. Documents are published in their original language. The contents generally include the Annual Letter of the Minister General and any other major letters; the Acts of the General Definitory; an annual summary of the work of the General Offices; news concerning Provincial and Custodial Chapters; news concerning Assemblies of the Order's Federations; a necrology of the friars; statistics; and some captioned photos.

Here is a summary of some of the topics covered in the 2016 issue:

From the *Acta Summi Pontificis et Apostolicae Sedis*:

a synthesis of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis; the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera* of the Holy Father Francis at the Conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and some homilies or speeches of the Holy Father concerning religious life, especially Franciscan religious life.

From the Congregation of the Causes of Saints:

decrees on the heroic virtues of the Servants of God Quirico PIGNALBERI, Venanzio KATARYNIEC (secularly called Joseph) and Luigi LO VERDE (secularly called Filippo).

From the *Acta Ministri Generalis*: the Decree of suppression-erection of the Italian Province of St. Francis and the proclamation convoking the Provincial Chapter of the Italian Province of St. Francis with attached documents.

From the General Secretariat:

a summary of the General Definitory Meetings, news on some general canonical visitations, the "diary" of the Minister General, and the diaries of the Assistants General and various "*Officiales Ordinis*."

As usual, the issue concludes with a necrology of the friars who died in 2016.

commentarium@ofmconv.net

Meeting of Franciscans International

■ Friar Jude WINKLER / Photo: Friar Markus HEINZE, OFM.

The International Board of Directors of Franciscans International met at Leo House in New York City from November 17-19, 2017, for their semi-annual meeting.

Friar Jude WINKLER, OFM Conv., is the Order's Delegate to this organization which has offices in Geneva and New York and lobbies for human rights issues at the United Nations.

Recently they were able to find an advocate to serve in the New York office to strengthen the presence of FI in the Security Council of the UN and at other offices there such as the Council for Mining and the Council for Indigenous peoples.

This will be the last meeting at which Friar Jude will be present, for he has come to the end of his second three-year term. His place will be taken by Friar Joseph BLAY, OFM Conv., the Order's Secretary for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.



Board of Directors

Franciscans with the Pope

■ Source: Vatican Press – Editorial Board

At 11:40 a.m., on November 23, 2017, the Holy Father Francis held an audience with members of the Franciscan families of the First Order (OFM Conv., OFM Cap., and OFM) and the Third Order Regular (TOR).

The current President of the Conference of Ministers General, Friar Mauro JÖHRI, OFM Cap., first greeted the Pope with the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "May the Lord give you peace!" He then expressed gratitude for the audience and for the Pope's invitation to all Franciscans to remain united; an invitation the Pontiff made during his visit to Assisi on the solemnity of our Seraphic Father in 2013.

Friar Mauro spoke about some sad moments in our history and the recurrence of divisions, for example the 500th anniversary of the Papal Bull *Ite vos* which was promulgated by Pope Leo X on May 29, 1517. However, he also highlighted some beautiful examples of collaboration which have taken place in recent years, for example, the "Generalissimo Chapter" which was held from May 29 to June 2, 2016, and which brought together representatives of the Franciscans of Umbria. He also noted the efforts underway to create a single Franciscan University and the establishment of groups of mixed friars from our Orders for the purpose of collaborating on formation.

Next, the Holy Father made a speech which focused on our charism as "Friars Minor". St. Francis wanted his friars to form a true fraternity, founded on Jesus Christ, the Son of God who made himself poor, and our brother, for the sake of our salvation: "becoming poor, though he was rich" (cf. 2 Cor. 8: 9).

The Pope went on to affirm that minority is, above all, a place of encounter with God, with one's brothers and sisters and the whole of creation. Our relationship with the Father must always lead to the joy of restoring to Him all the gifts he has given us, through our neighbors and our brothers and sisters in greatest need. We must always remember that all creation is our common home and we must take care of it for the sake of future generations.

Pope Francis ended his speech by renewing our founder's request: *be minor!*

He then invoked the Lord's blessing upon all Franciscans and asked us to pray for him and his ministry.

Rome: Conference of the Artists of the Order

■ Friar Victor MORA MESÉN / Photo: Friar Franciszek CZARNOWSKI

There is no limit to creativity when it is put to the service of Evangelization. This was the impression that lingered in the minds of the participants at the first Conference of the Artists of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

On November 20-21, 2017, the Conference, entitled "Sacred Art and New Evangelization" took place at the Seraphicum International College in Rome. It brought together some twenty artist-friars along with members of the General Definitory. Creators of artistic works in different fields—music, painting, sculpture and literature—got to know each other and share their handiwork.

A number of conferences and testimonies provided a framework for further dialogue. There is no doubt that art is one of the greatest expressions of human communication, therefore its potential for evangelization should be considered an integral part of our mission in the modern world. This statement was the important conclusion of the meeting. It implied that we should develop clear guidelines at the level of the Order and its Jurisdictions, so that friars with special artistic abilities might have the preparation and means they need to put their talent to work in the service of proclaiming the Gospel.



The participants

www.ofmconv.net

Poland: Document of the Bishops on the Militia of the Immaculate

■ Editorial Board

On the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Militia of the Immaculate (M.I.), the Polish Episcopate issued a pastoral letter entitled “One Hundred Years with the Immaculate and Her Militia”.

The document was signed by the cardinals, archbishops and bishops present at the plenary assembly, which was held June 6-7, 2017, in Zakopane, Poland. However, the document was only issued on November 27, 2017 and is intended for pastoral use on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – December 8, 2017.

The Polish bishops affirm that St. Maximilian Mary KOLBE founded the Militia to embody the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the practice of daily life. The M.I. was started mainly from the desire to save souls, but it also arose from the challenges of its day. The purpose of the Militia is the fulfillment of the Church’s mission, which calls for the conversion of all sinners and their sanctification “under the protection and through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin.” The movement is open to all: lay people and clerics, children, young people and adults.

Today the Militia of the Immaculate faces new challenges: “Programmatic and ideological atheism has given way to neo-liberal and anti-ecclesial attitudes. The Militia walks with a changing world and goes beyond the traditional activity begun by St. Maximilian, to develop new forms of apostolate that correspond with the contemporary challenges of the Church and the world. This has produced a number of vibrant organizations, including the Youth Movement of the Militia of the Immaculate, the School of Evangelization of the Immaculate, and the Militia of the Immaculate at the Foot of the Cross. This last group constitutes a powerful army of prayer and suffering. They are—as St. Maximilian put it—“the vanguard of the Militia”.

The Polish bishops went on to emphasize that right now, the Militia appears to be the specific antidote to various types of conflicts and enslavements of the human soul, because it forms man after the example of Mary. “Let us pray to the Immaculate, that St. Maximilian has made his Ideal, his Leader and our Mediatrix of all graces from God, to lead us to the sweet Heart of Jesus in the ranks of His Militia.”

Report on Chapter VI of the Constitutions

■ Friar Timothy KULBICKI, CERC/CIRC Secretary

A large number of friaries throughout the world (c. 35%) participated in the study of draft Chapter VI of the Constitutions, the last step in the continuing formation process regarding our identity.

Many thanks to the CIRC members, the Provincial/Custodial/Delegation reference friars, and the Secretaries of Friary Chapters.

After study in Friary Chapters, the text is about to undergo a final check by the General Definitory as the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Extraordinary General Chapter of 2018. It will also undergo a final editorial check as well as a canonical review prior to the convocation of the Chapter.

More than 150 suggestions (mostly editorial or stylistic) were sent to CERC and have been examined in preparing a second official draft of Chapter VI.

A more detailed report can be found on the Constitutions Web page.

constitutiones@ofmconv.net

Rome: Seraphicum Alumni Jubilee

■ Friar Gianfranco GRIECO

On December 20-22, 2017, the Seraphicum's first clerical students met together in Rome, some fifty years after their priestly ordination.

In 1964, on the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, these students, along with 120 other friars, moved from the International College on Via San Teodoro 42, to the new headquarters of the Theological Faculty of San Bonaventura, on Via del Serafico 1.

Those celebrating their jubilee included the Most Reverend Friar Berard OSHIKAWA, Bishop of Naha-Okinawa, Japan; and Friars Gianfranco GRIECO, Giuliano ABRAM, Wayne HELLMANN and Valerio DOMINICI. On December 21, 1967, these friars were ordained at the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, in Rome's EUR district, by His Eminence Paolo Cardinal MARELLA, Archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and the last Protector of the Seraphic Order.

The following year, more were ordained, including Friar Massimiliano Valentin REDONDO from Spain; Friars Salvatore RUZZA, Pietro GUERRIERI, Mario MINNICUCCI, Mario ALESSANDRINI, and Massimiliano BACCILE from Italy; and Friar Klaus RENGGLI from Switzerland. There was also an American, Friar Dennis JANICHI, but he had been called unexpectedly to Heaven. In all, there were thirteen ministers for Christ who gave, and continue to give, their lives for the Church and the Seraphic Order.

On the morning of December 21, the friars concelebrated Mass with Pope Francis at Casa Santa Marta in the Vatican. They also met with their confreres at the Apostolic Penitentiary. In the late afternoon, the friars returned to the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul for a second concelebration.

The next day, they concelebrated Mass with the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCA, in the chapel of the General Curia of the Twelve Holy Apostles. Afterwards, there was an agape meal with the religious of the community.

These friars celebrating their fiftieth anniversary of priestly and Franciscan life received special thanks from the Minister General, on behalf of the entire Order, for the fidelity they showed during their long journey and the work they have done in the vineyard of the Lord: sowing peace and goodness in the name of our Seraphic Father St. Francis.



The honorees in the chapel of the General Curia

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GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION

Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL
Secretary General of the SGF



Tanzania: Visit to the Common Novitiate

■ Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL

On October 25-27, 2017, Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, the Secretary General for Formation (SGF) visited the community of novices and their formators in Arusha, Tanzania.

Friar Louis arranged the meeting to get a first-hand look at the novitiate formation program and to make a presentation to the novices and formators on the theme of Franciscan formation. It was quite a nice visit; the novices and friars were very hospitable.

The novitiate is not far from the imposing Mount Meru (4,566 meters high [14,980 feet]), and lies seventy kilometers [44 miles] west of Kilimanjaro. The area's beauty and tranquil environment make it an ideal setting for the novitiate. There are eight novices—three from Tanzania, four from Kenya and one from Uganda. There are two formators, Friar Everest MKINDA from Tanzania and Friar Dennis NTABO from Kenya. The guardian is Friar Francis MUMBURI. The community is trying to be self-sufficient and gets the provisions it needs through a farm which the friars operate under the guidance of the guardian.

This formation house is the common novitiate of the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF). It is the novitiate for the Conventual Franciscan Jurisdictions in East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda).

The Federation has common houses of formation at all levels of initial formation. The common postulancy house is in Ruiru, Kenya (first year), and Munyonyo, Uganda (second year). The common novitiate is in Arusha, Tanzania, plus there are two more common novitiates in the Province of Zambia and the Custody of Ghana. There are formation houses for philosophy students in Accra, Ghana and Lusaka, Zambia. For theology studies there is the St. Bonaventure College in Tangaza (Nairobi), Kenya.



The novices with the SGF Secretary

Zambia: Formation of Guardians

■ Friar Emanuele RIMOLI

On November 7-9, 2017, a formation course for the guardians of the Province of the Franciscan Protomartyrs in Zambia was held in Ndola, Zambia.

The course was led by Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, the Secretary General for Formation (SGF) and Friar Emanuele RIMOLI of the Seraphicum.

The themes of the identity, role and service of the guardian were developed from different points of view: theological-anthropological, psycho-pedagogical, Franciscan, juridical and cultural, through an interesting presentation by Professor Felix NONDO.

Classroom work alternated with workshop discussion and moments of prayer.

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The course ended with an open forum led by the Minister Provincial, Friar Richard CHIMF-WEMBE. During the forum, the fourteen guardians present were able to interact by discussing the needs, plans and difficulties of their communities. At the end, the Minister Provincial gave each of the participants a “Guardian’s Diploma”, a mandate listing the qualities of a Minister according to St. Francis.

Friars Louis and Emanuele ended their stay with a visit to the St. Joseph postulancy house and friary in Kalumbwa and a fraternal meeting with the novitiate community in Kitwe.



The guardians

Rome: CIF Meeting

■ Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL

On November 13-17, 2017, a meeting of the International Commission for Formation (CIF) was held at the Seraphicum in Rome.

The main purpose of the meeting was to work on the final revision of *Franciscan Discipleship*, in view of the upcoming Ordinary General Chapter. The CIF members worked on a first draft, which had been prepared by the General Secretariat for Formation (SGF) beforehand.

The work of the Commission was also enlivened by the presentation of two reflections. The first, by Friar Giulio CESAREO, was on the criteria for admission to the postulate. The second, by Friar Francesco SCIALPI, was about ongoing formation.

The work of meeting was aimed at preparing, in the coming months, a second draft of *Franciscan Discipleship* by the General Secretariat for Formation. This second draft will be presented to the Minister General and his Definitory for their final evaluation.

After their suggestions are integrated and there is a final reading of the text by the members of the CIF, the SGF will prepare a final draft of *Franciscan Discipleship* before the next meeting of the CIF in 2018, with a view to the draft’s ultimate approval at the next General Chapter.

During the meeting, Minister General Friar Marco TASCA, and Vicar General Friar Jerzy NOREL met with CIF members to examine and discuss various formation topics.

The meeting was intensive and rewarding, both for the work that was done and for the fraternal time spent visiting and discussing. Among those attending were: Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, SGF Secretary General; Franklin DURAN ZAMBRANO, SGF member and representative for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC); Friar Joseph FISCHER, representative for the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF); Friar Piotr SZCZEPAŃSKI, representative for the Federatio Europae Mediae et Orientalis (FEMO); Friar Mattia CHOI, representative for the Federation of Asian Minor Conventuals (FAMC); Friar Alessandro PERISSINOTTO, representative for the Federazione Inter-mediterranea Ministri Provinciali (FIMP); Friar James CIARAMITARO, representative for the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF); and Friar Joseph KACHELEWA, representative for the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF).



The participants

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR MISSION ANIMATION

Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI
Secretary General of the SGAM



Poland/Italy: October Mission

■ Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI

“The world vitally needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Church, Christ continues his mission as the *Good Samaritan*, caring for the bleeding wounds of humanity, and as *Good Shepherd*, constantly seeking out those who wander along winding paths that lead nowhere.” (Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Day 2017, no. 5)

On October 2-12, 2017, Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI, the Secretary General for Mission Animation (SGAM) traveled to Poland, to make a fraternal visit to the Conventual Franciscan communities in Głogówek (postulancy house), Kalwaria Pałacowska (novitiate) and Cracow, for the purpose of doing mission animation and conducting prayer vigils.

On October 21-22, he held a meeting in Padua, Italy, to talk about the missionary experience in Peru.

On October 25, he carried out missionary animation at the novitiate in Assisi, Italy.

It was a meaningful time of prayer and witness, a time which “continually sends us forth to proclaim the Gospel of the love of God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit”. (Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Day 2017, intro)



The novices in Assisi



The postulants in Głogówek



The novices
in Kalwaria Pałacowska

Brussels: Ministers General with Missionaries

■ Friar Alphonse VAZHAPPANADY, SGAM Vice-Secretary

On November 11-12, 2017, two of the Ministers General of the First Order, Friar Marco TASCA, OFM Conv., and Friar Mauro JÖHRI, OFM Cap., made a fraternal visit to the friary of Notre-Dame des Nations in Brussels.

They met with the friars from the three Franciscan families who were participating in the inter-Franciscan missionary course (in English) and encouraged them as they began their work as missionaries.

On Saturday evening, November 11, the two Ministers General met with the community and led a fraternal discussion on the various challenges in Franciscan missions. They encouraged the friars to preserve the Franciscan charism, especially the fraternal life. They reaffirmed the importance of authentic Franciscan witness and transparency.

The next day, the friars concelebrated Mass with Friar Mauro JÖHRI presiding. During his homily, Friar Mauro emphasized the importance of the missionary vocation for every faithful Christian. He invited each missionary to have the strength and courage to witness the Gospel in daily life.

Friar Marco TASCA presided over the rite of the Missionary Mandate. The ceremony was very meaningful for the friars and for the entire assembly. It was an urgent invitation for everyone to renew his missionary passion for the Gospel.



The future missionaries with the Ministers General of the OFM Conv., and OFM Cap.

Italy: Future Missionaries on Pilgrimage

■ Friar Alphonse VAZHAPPANADY, SGAM Vice-Secretary

On November 14-18, 2017, the English language course in Belgium for new missionaries concluded with a trip to Italy to visit Rome and various Franciscan destinations.

The course was open to members of the three Franciscan families of the First Order (OFM, OFM Cap., and OFM Conv.).

After nearly three months of study, eleven friars from different nations went on a weeklong pilgrimage, which included Assisi and other Franciscan places. They were led by Friar Jaroslav WYSOCZAŃSKI, OFM Conv., the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (SGAM).

The pilgrims visited Rome, Greccio, Fontecolombo and Assisi. For most of them, it was their



The future missionaries with the friars of the Twelve Holy Apostles friary in Rome

first experience in the land of the Poverello. The atmosphere of the pilgrimage was fraternal and prayerful.

On the first day, the participants made a scheduled visit to the General Curia of the Conventual Franciscans. There, they met with the community of the friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles and took part in a fraternal discussion about their experience.

The pilgrimage to Assisi was a profound experience for the new missionaries; they got to know the places where our charism and our fraternity were born.

Ghana: SGAM and GPIC Animation

■ Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI

On December 11-21, 2017, Friar Joseph BLAY, the General Delegate for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (GPIC) and Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI, the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (SGAM) visited Ghana to carry out missionary animation.

Prior to that, the two friars had been visiting the Conventual Franciscan mission in Burkina Faso, from December 6-11, 2017.

On December 11, the day of their arrival in Ghana, they met with the seminarians in Accra and presented lectures on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, and the Franciscan missions. On December 14, they participated in the inauguration of the hospital in Jema, the town where Friar Joseph was born. On December 15-17, the two friars visited the community in Takoradi, where Friar Jarosław presided over the second Sunday Mass. On December 18-20, they visited the communities in Elmina and Saltpond. On the evening of December 20, they returned to Accra and departed for Rome the next day.

There are six students studying philosophy at the diocesan seminary in Accra; two are from Uganda and four are from Ghana. Their formation team is comprised of the Rector, Friar Anthony ASUH and the Vice-Rector, Friar Charles AMOAH. Other members of the community include the Custos, Friar Anthony BEZO; the Vicar-Custos and guardian, Friar Eugene ANTWI BOSIAKO; and the Vocation Director, Friar Gregory AMORE. Each of them works in tandem with the formators.

The novitiate is located in Saltpond, Ghana. This year there are twelve novices: two from Burkina Faso, one (a Nigerian) from the Custody of the Holy Land and nine from Ghana. The novices are directed by their Novice Master, Friar Moses ARTHUR and the Assistant Novice Master, Friar Timothy KUUPINE. The novitiate is part of a spiritual retreat center called the Franciscan Valley of Prayer and Silence. The friars of the stable community there, led by their guardian, Friar Isaac FRIMPONG, provide spiritual guidance to groups of lay people, religious and priests throughout the year.

During the lectures with the seminarians and the novices, Friar Joseph, a Delegate of the Minister General, explained what his mission is about. Starting with our spirituality and the

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example of Saint Francis, he stressed the importance of awakening in ourselves a new love for creation and a greater responsibility for our land.

As always, Friar Jarosław focused on missionary spirituality. He talked about the current status of the missions in our Order and the “New Evangelization” in the Franciscan and African context, starting with Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and the letter of the Minister General on missionary work. He also spoke about his experience as a missionary in Peru and told the story of the martyrdom and the beatification of Friars Michał TOMASZEK and Zbigniew STRZAŁKOWSKI. At the end of the presentations, both lecturers joined the friars in formation to reflect on how we Conventual Franciscans can respond today to the challenges of the mission. What do we mean by mission today?

The inauguration of the hospital in Jema was an occasion for joyous celebration by the local community and surrounding villages. This project was inspired by the vision of Friar Joseph and was realized, after massive effort, by cash contributions from citizens and the collaboration of various organizations, including: *St. Anthony’s Charities*, *Cuore Amico*, *the Salesian Association* and the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels.

On December 16, both visitors went to Takoradi to attend a music concert performed by the novices and their formators. The concert took place to launch their new album.

During the entire visit to Ghana, there were powerful moments of prayer and discussion with various friars about life and missionary work.



Friars in Accra, Ghana



The novices in Saltpond, Ghana

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR JUSTICE, PEACE, AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Friar Joseph BLAY
General Delegate for GPIC



Bonn: Franciscans at the COP

■ Friar Joseph BLAY

On November 3-17, 2017, the twenty-third edition of the Conference of the Parties (COP) was held in Bonn, Germany, under the aegis of the United Nations.

The Franciscan Family was represented by a group of ten people, which included Friar Joseph BLAY, the Delegate General for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (GPIC). The group was hosted by the *Missionszentrale der Franziskaner* (MIFF) of the Friars Minor in Bonn.

The Franciscan delegation participated in an opening procession and a small demonstration against atmospheric pollution. The Franciscans organized a number of events, thanks to local friars, such as an ecumenical prayer for peace at the church of St. Elizabeth and an ecumenical prayer for creation at the church of St. Winfried.

There were other formative moments, such as the meeting of the APA (*Ad hoc* Working Group on the Paris Agreement) at which Friar Joseph and two other members were able to participate as selected observers.

On the afternoon of November 8, Friar Joseph took advantage of the opportunity to make a small pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed John DUNS SCOTUS and a visit to our Conventual confreres in Cologne.



During the demonstration

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Burkina Faso: SGAM and GPIC Animation

■ Friar Joseph BLAY

On December 6-11, 2017, Friar Joseph BLAY, the Delegate General for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (GPIC), and Friar Jarosław WYSOCZAŃSKI, the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (SGAM), visited Burkina Faso for the purpose of animation.

On arriving, Friars Joseph and Jarosław were happy to share in our friars' joy at having been recognized by the President of Burkina Faso. Friar Marek HRYNOWIECKI the Provincial Delegate, accepted a medal on December 5, 2017, in recognition of the contribution the Conventual friars have made to integral human development in the country.

The Provincial Delegation in Burkina Faso has two communities. The Ouagadougou community has four postulants, a clerical student and three friars: Friar Marek, the Provincial Delegate and guardian, and Friars Christian SEOGO and Benedict OFOSU, formators. The Sabou community is composed of Friars Sylwester GAŁLEWSKI, Giacomo DI CIANO and Tomasz KRĘT. They serve at Sabou's parish and Medical Center.

On December 8, 2017, all the friars of the Delegation, together with the postulants, gathered in Sabou to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. There, they prayed and took part in GPIC and missionary animation.

Reflecting on ways GPIC can be implemented in a country like Burkina Faso, Friar Joseph suggested the friars might take the opportunity to help girls who are forced to marry, organize young people to collect plastic waste, plant trees and put up solar panels. During his lecture, Friar Joseph awakened passion, new sensitivity and love for creation.

For his part, Friar Jarosław focused on the spirituality of missionary work, the missionary situation in our Order and on the "New Evangelization" in the Franciscan context, starting from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and the letter of the Minister General on missionary work.

Friar Jarosław led a discussion on the experience of missionary service in Peru and on the story of the martyrdom and beatification of Friars Michał TOMASZEK and Zbigniew STRZAŁKOWSKI.

The festive and formative day ended with a moment of prayer and remembrance at the tomb of Friar Micheale Egah TODO, who died in a car accident on November 25, 2014.

The following day, December 9, Friar Tomasz took Friars Joseph and Jarosław to visit the hospital our friars founded in Sabou. There, they were able to observe the great work, collaboration and commitment of our friars in Burkina Faso.



With the friars of Burkina Faso

OFFICE OF THE POSTULATOR GENERAL

Friar Damian-Gheorghe PĂTRAȘCU
Postulator General



Santhià, Italy: Opening of the Collanian Year

■ Friar Damian PĂTRAȘCU

From October 31 to November 2, 2017, Friar Damian PĂTRAȘCU, the Postulator General, traveled to Santhià, Italy, to attend the opening of the Collanian Year, in honor of the Servant of God, Sister Maria Santina COLLANI, of the Congregation of the Merciful Sisters.

On this occasion, the Postulator met with the Most Reverend Marco ARNOLFO, Archbishop of Vercelli, to discuss the progress of her cause and the procedure for exhuming and translating the Servant of God from the town's central cemetery to the parish church of Saints Agatha and George.

On the next day, Archbishop ARNOLFO presided over a Pontifical Mass, which was celebrated by the General Postulator and the local pastor. A large crowd of faithful was present along with the Sisters of the congregation, for the opening of this year of prayer and reflection on the figure and spirituality of the Servant of God.

In the afternoon, another Mass was celebrated in the town cemetery. The Mass concluded with a procession toward the tomb of the Servant of God and the offering of a floral tribute.



During the ceremonies

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GENERAL ASSISTANT OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCANS ORDER

Friar Alfred PARAMBAKATHU
General Assistant of the OFS



Rome: OFS General Chapter

■ Friar Alfred PARAMBAKATHU

On November 4-12, 2017, the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) celebrated its fifteenth General Chapter at the Seraphicum College in Rome.

This was an intermediate Chapter with some 130 participants. Seventy-four of these were Capitulars and others were observers from some of the emerging National Fraternities. The participants represented seventy-one different countries around the world.

The theme of the Chapter was “As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world” (John 17:18).

The Chapter began with a Mass celebrated by His Eminence Pietro Cardinal PAROLIN, the Vatican Secretary of State.

All three Ministers General of the First Order celebrated Mass on different days and graced the seculars with their paternal advice.

On Thursday, November 9, Minister General Friar Marco TASCA, OFM Conv., presided over Mass. At that time, he exhorted the Seculars to return to the same “madness” that characterized the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He also shared some fraternal time with the Seculars and the Minister General of the OFS, Tibor KAUSER. The Seculars presented Friar Marco with a copy of a special edition of the Rule of the OFS, published to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of its approval.



The Minister General
with the Rule of the OFS

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■ THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTENT OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATE

Friar Raffaele DI MURO
International M.I. President



Rome: M.I. 100th Anniversary and Conference

■ Agata PINKOSZ

On October 16-18, 2017, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Militia of the Immaculate (1917-2017) was celebrated in Rome. Militia members from fifteen countries around the world met in the Eternal City to celebrate the event, which was beautifully concluded with a papal audience.

The focal point of the pilgrimage was the friary of St. Maximilian, or “Casa Kolbe”, which is the home of the M.I. International Center. A welcoming team composed of about fifteen people, both lay and consecrated, made themselves available to accompany visiting groups on a guided tour which included the cell in the friary where the movement was founded, the chapel and the Kolbe Expo—a multimedia exhibition on the life and spirituality of Kolbe.

The first groups arrived at Casa Kolbe in the afternoon of October 15th. Groups continued arriving through October 17 in order to get to know St. Maximilian’s “Roman” sites. The groups came from around the world. Some were from various regions in Italy: Emilia-Romagna, the Marches, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily and Tuscany. Others came from Mexico, Bolivia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, the United States and Brazil. One afternoon a hundred years ago, on October 16, a young Kolbe and six of his confreres met in a room of the Seraphic College at Via San Teodoro 42 and began the Marian and missionary journey of the M.I. Today’s Militia members gathered in the Basilica of Sant’Andrea delle Fratte to commemorate the 100th anniversary with the celebration of Mass. In this festive setting, where the Martyr of Auschwitz celebrated his first Mass, Friar Marco TASCA, the International Assistant of the M.I., and Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, presided over the Eucharist. The evening was marked by a powerful prayer vigil called “Steps of Gratitude”, in thanksgiving for the gift of the Kolbean charism.

On October 17, the participants met in the evening to listen to a concert of Kolbean songs by Alessandro PELLICCIARO from his album “Concedimi di Lodarti” [Allow Me to Praise You].

On October 18, the festivities concluded in the heart of the Church, St. Peter’s Square, with everyone congregated closely around Pope Francis. There was a moment of powerful grace when the M.I. International President, Friar Raffaele DI MURO; the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCA and the General Director of the Father Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculate, Giovanna VENTURI, gave Pope Francis some relics of St. Maximilian, a copy of St. Maximilian’s *Writings* in Spanish and a copy of the magazine *Miles Immaculatae*. They had a prolonged moment of dialogue and exchange with the Pontiff.

In the afternoon, the Militia members returned to Sant’Andrea della Valle. In the last few days, the basilica had served as an evening gathering place. During Mass, the Militia members thanked God for the M.I.’s one hundred years of mission and history and asked for every grace needed for its upcoming 200th anniversary, and that they be found ready for the ever-renewing journey.

Conversion, Secularity and Openness—these are the three words that emerged from the work of the Delegates’ Committee, which met in Rome at the same time to study guidelines for the coming years, for the M.I.’s formational and apostolic journey.

Friar Raffaele DI MURO concluded by urging those present to move forward in active communion, in the awareness of the missionary call entrusted to the movement by the founder one hundred years ago.

Kolbean Congress of the Conventual Friars Minor

■ Friar Raffaele DI MURO / Photo: Friar Franciszek CZARNOWSKI

On October 19-20, 2017, the international Seraphicum College in Rome hosted an International Kolbean Congress entitled: *Saint Maximilian Kolbe: The Lifestyle of a Friar Minor Conventual in the Light of the New Evangelization.*

During the 100th anniversary of the Militia of the Immaculate, the Friars Minor Conventual “interviewed” the holy confere in order to add more evangelical and missionary significance to their lifestyles and to facilitate the forthcoming revision of the Constitutions. Those attending the Congress included the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCA, the General Definitory, the government of the M.I. International, and various Delegates–Ministers Provincial, formators, guardians and Franciscan scholars—who received an impromptu invitation to attend this important Congress.

On October 19th, the first work session of the Congress, crucial issues regarding the lives of the friars were examined: fraternal life, minority, mission and vows. A presentation on each topic was made by Friars Paulin SOTOWSKI, James McCURRY, Raffaele DI MURO and Grzegorz BARTOSIK, respectively.

St. Maximilian offered his testimony in every area of consecrated life, making prophetic and profound innovations that can be powerfully inspirational for today’s religious family. Father Kolbe demonstrated an immense capacity for listening and trusting, which enabled him to adhere to God’s plans and to “immerse himself” in a way of following that was always open to the newness of the Spirit.

On October 20, the second work session, there were lectures by Friars Grzegorz OWSIANKO, Gilson Miguel NUNES, Francesco BUSTILLO and Fabrizio BORDIN. The moderator was Friar Tomasz SZYMCZAK. They made presentations on new Kolbean missionary realities which operate in the memory and wake of the Saint. These include a school of evangelization for young people in Poland, pastoral activities using new means of communication in Brazil, assistance facilities for the poor in Portugal and the Kolbe Expo in France.

Afterwards, those attending the Congress gathered into study groups where they discussed and debated the content of the presentations and offered valuable suggestions for the future of the Order.

The Congress took place in a peaceful, family atmosphere, a family drawing upon the example of St. Maximilian, through a mix of theological content and testimony, in order to ponder its future with confidence and openness.



The participants

Brasília: Delegates' Congress

■ Friar Raffaele DI MURO

On November 3-4, 2017, Delegates of the Militia of the Immaculate (M.I.) of Brazil met at the Theological Institute in Brasília.

The Delegates came from two large M.I. centers: "Jardim da Imaculada" in Brasília and "São Bernardo do Campo" in São Paulo.

The purpose of this Congress was to set up Brazil's first elective National M.I. Assembly, which will install a government for the M.I. Association in Brazil.

The meeting was led by the M.I. International President, Friar Raffaele DI MURO. It was characterized by a series of fraternal debates between the speakers, who, above all, sparked an enthusiastic and mutual exchange of knowledge. Later, they worked committedly towards getting the elective assembly set up. Given how vast Brazil is, it is not easy for M.I. groups working there to come together. However, today's connections and technology facilitated some apostolic "teamwork", animated by the deep communion of sharing Kolbe's memory.

At the conclusion of the Congress, some excellent results were produced. The elective assembly will take place in Brasília on June 1-3, 2018, at which time the M.I. of Brazil will receive its own unique governmental and organizational structure. This will mark the end of a two-year journey that had been led by the M.I. International Center.

Two commissions will be working to ensure that the event is well prepared in a spiritual and practical way. The unity of our Association in Brazil will further strengthen the already very dynamic Kolbean movement in this region.



The delegates

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M.I. President in Japan

■ Friar Raffaele DI MURO

On November 21-23, 2017, the International President of the Militia of the Immaculate (M.I.), Friar Raffaele DI MURO went to Japan where he visited the National Center of the M.I. Association in Nagasaki, the one that St. Maximilian KOLBE called “Mugenzaino no Sono” (City of the Immaculate).

On November 21, significant and meaningful stops were made to the Kolbean sites in this area, particularly the cell where the saint lived. In addition, Friar Raffaele was able to exchange views and ideas with the National Assistant, Friar Iohannes Baptista YAMAGUCHI, and to greet those who work at the headquarters of *Seibo no Kishi* magazine (*Knight of the Immaculate*).

On November 22, he met all the friars of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. in Japan. With the invaluable help of an interpreter, Friar Lucas (Shin-ichiroh) TANIZAKI, he was able to discuss the history and current situation of the M.I. It was a productive time for planning the future of the M.I. movement in this nation. The General Definitor, Friar Benedict BAEK, also participated in the meeting.

On November 23, the visit concluded with the celebration of Mass presided over by the Most Reverend Berard Toshio OSHIKAWA, OFM Conv., Bishop of Naha, Japan.

The visit was very fruitful as it was an opportunity for peaceful conversation between the friars and the M.I. International President, regarding the M.I. in Japan, and it culminated with some ambitious planning for the future. We can affirm that this place is deeply rooted in Kolbean history. In the past, it yielded countless fruits and even today, it continues to produce new missionary shoots.



In the lecture room

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■ GENERAL DELEGATE FOR THE II ORDER AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTE

Friar Germano TOGNETTI
General Delegate for the II Order



Rome: Convocation of the Abbesses

■ Friar Germano TOGNETTI

For the second time this year, there was a Convocation of the Abbesses of the Federation of St. Clare of Assisi of the Urbanist Poor Clares of Italy.

It took place on October 22-27, 2017, as before, at the Seraphicum College in Rome. A good number of the Abbesses of the federated monasteries were present. During the Convocation, various speakers made presentations, including Friar Emanuele RIMOLI; Friar Felice FIASCONARO, the guardian of the International Seraphicum College; and Father Marco GUIDA. There were other speakers, as well, in particular, Sister Nicla SPEZZATI, the Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life; and the Capuchin Poor Clare, Sister Chiara Francesca LACCHINI.

The theme of the Convocation revolved around the figure of the Abbess as an “animator and the person in charge” of the government of the community.

The work of the Convocation was presided over by the Mother President of the Federation, Sister Damiana ARDESI. Friar Germano TOGNETTI also attended in his role as General Delegate for the Second Order.

The Procurator General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, Friar Maurizio DI PAOLO, offered suggestions in his role as legal adviser.

On the afternoon of October 24, an extraordinary outing took place: a guided tour of the churches of San Luigi dei Francesi and Santa Maria del Popolo. The outing provided an opportunity to view some of the extraordinary paintings of Caravaggio in person. His masterpieces fill the heart and the mind, and help one continue the daily journey of following Christ in the footsteps of St. Clare and St. Francis, with determination and love.

The Convocation was carried out in a climate of great solidarity, intense sisterhood, and deep and attentive listening. Any trepidation in the face of urgent issues confronting the cloistered world was always met with community and personal prayer. It was a time for meeting and study, but also for prayer, formation and intense sisterly communion. The journey continues now on the path of our lives as consecrated persons, among the men and women of our time, with our gaze and our hearts constantly fixed upon the bridegroom, Jesus.



During the meeting

■ GENERAL FINANCIAL OFFICE



SOME THANK YOU NOTES...

FOR MASS OFFERINGS:

- Parish of the Twelve Holy Apostles, Rome, Italy
- Prov. of Warsaw, Poland
- Cust. of Assisi
- Prov. of Slovenia
- Prov. of St. Anthony, Italy

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE ORDER:

- Prov. of Spain
- Prov. of SJC, USA

FOR THE MISSIONS:

- Prov. of St. Francis, Italy
- Prov. of OLC, USA
- Prov. of Germany
- Prov. of Croatia

FOR SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Prov. of Spain
- Prov. of Warsaw, Poland

FOR THE FORMATION FUND:

- Prov. of Japan
- Prov. of SJC, USA
- Cust. of Ghana
- Cust. of Austria-Switzerland
- Prov. of Slovenia
- Cust. of Russia
- Prov. of Argentina-Uruguay

THANKS

also to those who have made donations using the communications channel of the **GENERAL CURIA**

The financial aid administered by the General Curia isn't the only circle of solidarity in the Order; in fact, there are commendable and exemplary solidarity initiatives, for example, between Mother Provinces and their Daughter Custodies or Delegations, or through "twinning" thanks to the involvement of groups, institutions and parishes. We extend our thanks to you all!

AFRICAN FEDERATION OF CONVENTUAL FRANCISCANS

Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI
Assistant General for the AFCOF



Kenya: Jubilee Celebrations

■ Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI

On October 1, 2017, the Franciscan Center in Limuru, in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, marked the 25th anniversary of the Order's presence among the local population. The Center is a presence of the Provincial Custody of St. Francis in Kenya.

The friars have been serving this multicultural population of Catholic faith since 1992. This region is the most industrial area in the country. The town of Limuru (about 60,000 inhabitants) has a unique, multinational "factory BATA" (shoe factory). This special entity attracts workers from all over the country and from almost every tribe in Kenya. The Christians the friars serve come mostly from this industrial area, but also from the neighboring agricultural areas.

At the invitation of His Eminence Maurice Cardinal OTUNGA (the process for his beatification is currently underway); the friars took possession of a potato field that had been donated to the Church by the local authorities. From there, they founded the Franciscan Center which has been in continuous operation ever since. The Center carries out various functions: (1) it is a parish with about 900 families (operating in three churches); (2) it runs the Kolbe Press, considered the only Catholic publishing house in the country, which promotes the "written word" in tandem with the Daughters of St. Paul; (3) it is a center for single mothers and street children—built thanks to immense help from St. Anthony's Charities and subsequently extended by other generous benefactors; and (4) it is a clinic serving the health needs of the local population.

The friars speak to the local people in Swahili. This language helps consolidate the area's very multicultural population and is spoken by several tribes in Kenya.

The liturgy of this "Jubilee" was presided over by the first Superior and Pastor of the Franciscan Center (1992-1998) Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI. He is currently the Assistant General for the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF).



The participants celebrating

CONFERENCES / FEDERATIONES – [AFCOF]

On the same day, two members of the Custody, Friars Paul NJOROGE and Vincent ONYANGO, made their solemn profession, and fifty children of the parish received their First Holy Communion.

After the liturgical celebration, the parishioners organized a festival of songs, dances and other amusements for the long hours of the afternoon. The parish provided excellent refreshment for all of the participants (over two thousand people) in the form of a real lunch. There was endless joy and excitement.

Kenya: Formation in the Custody

■ Friar Sławomir KLEIN

On October 9-12, 2017, an ongoing formation meeting was held for priests of the Provincial Custody of St. Francis of Assisi in Kenya. The meeting took place in Subukia, Kenya.

The meeting was divided into two thematic sections: a scientific and spiritual conference and a discussion on various issues of the Custody.

On the first day, the participants attended a lecture by Father John Baptist MASAYI on “Psycho-spiritual Healing”. It is a form of healing developed more than twenty years ago in Canada which uses elements of Christian spirituality together with psychological methodology. Afterward, there was an interesting discussion on the subject.

The second day was devoted to current issues in the Custody, mainly the possibility of establishing Kenya as a Province. The friars’ opinion is positive on this; they have made up their minds and are determined to work on this project, therefore: *alea iacta est*— “the die is cast.”

The meeting venue was a retreat house in Subukia, officially known as “The Peace and Reconciliation Center”.



The friar priests

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Uganda: Minister General Visits Matugga

■ Friar Adam KLAG

On October 23, 2017, Friar Marco TASCA, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, made a fraternal visit to the friary and church at Matugga, Uganda.

Matugga was the second presence founded in the Conventual Franciscan mission in Uganda. Friar Marco was accompanied by Friar Timothy KULBICKI, the Secretary of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC).

They visited the community and became acquainted with the works the friars are carrying out.

They first visited the St. Charles Lwanga and St. Anthony of Padua elementary school, where the children prepared a warm welcome for them. This school was built with help from the St. Anthony's Charities Foundation.

Next, they visited the new Franciscan hospital under construction in Matugga, the elementary school in Kabunza and the convent and school of the Franciscan Sisters, who collaborate with the friars in Matugga.

The Minister General showed great interest in the friars' activities and expressed his sincere appreciation for the work that the Order is doing in this part of Uganda.



The dance in honor of the Minister General

Uganda: Events and Meetings

■ Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI

On October 21-28, 2017, a new friary and a new postulancy house were erected and an assembly was held for African formators and Major Superiors.

All of these events took place at the newly inaugurated Shrine of the Ugandan Martyrs, served by the Conventual Franciscans, in Munyonyo, Uganda.

The Delegation of Uganda belongs to the Province of St. Anthony and Blessed James of Strear in Poland (Cracow).

Those present for these events included the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCA and his collaborators from Rome: the Assistant General for the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF) Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI; the Secretary General for Formation, Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL; and the Secretary of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC), Friar Timothy KULBICKI. Other participants included the Minister Provincial of Cracow, Friar Marian GOŁĄB with his Vicar Provincial and Provincial Secretary and all the Superiors of the African Jurisdictions along with sixteen formators. Everything started at the

CONFERENCES / FEDERATIONES – [AFCOF]

Shrine dedicated to the Ugandan Martyrs with Mass presided over by the Minister General and attended by many faithful.

The friars and the ministers addressed some current issues closely affecting the life of the friars in both initial and ongoing formation.

All initial formation in Africa takes place in common formation houses. The postulancy program for candidates in East Africa is carried out in Ruiru, Kenya and Munyonyo Uganda. The novitiates are located in Itimpi, Zambia; Saltpond, Ghana; and Arusha, Tanzania. Philosophy studies take place in Lusaka, Zambia and Accra, Ghana, and theology studies are carried out in Nairobi, Kenya.

The numbers of vocations are growing continuously. This year alone there are twenty-eight novices from seven countries along with fifty-four friars in philosophy and fifty-four in theology. Therefore, the main concern of the Superiors and formators is to find valid solutions to ensure these young men receive sound and comprehensive formation in a context that is both African and Franciscan.

There are two important problems that are common across the board: an insufficient number of properly trained formators and the problem of maintaining the formation programs due to the continuous search for financial resources to cover the cost of study and daily needs.

Uganda: Assembly of AFCOF Formators

■ Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL

On October 23-27, 2017, an Assembly of the Formators of the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF) was convened in Uganda. Sixteen formators from various Jurisdictions participated.

The meeting was held mainly to talk about preparing the AFCOF formation directory and working on the revision of *Franciscan Discipleship*.

After participating in the inauguration of the new postulancy house in Munyonyo, Uganda, the formators gathered together with the Major Superiors for a joint meeting with the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCA. The Minister General spoke about the status of the Order in various parts of the world. He encouraged the formators and ministers and thanked them for their service.

On October 24, 2017, Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, the Secretary General for Formation (SGF), lectured on the challenges of formation today and updated the friars on the revision of *Franciscan Discipleship*. He also discussed the planned Inter-Franciscan Course (Franciscan Formation School for formators in Africa) to be held May 28-June 10, 2018, in Lusaka, Zambia.

The meeting continued with other presentations: Friar Mariusz KOZIOŁ spoke on "The Impact of Social Media in the Formation Setting"; Friar Rayan MUTAYOMBA spoke on "Franciscan Formation in the African Reality Today"; Friar Anthony Bezo KUTIERO spoke on "The Challenges of Community Life and the Use of Community Property in Houses of Formation" and Mr. Cornelius CHIKOTWE spoke on "The Challenges and Impact of Alcohol in the Modern World".

After attending the inauguration of the church dedicated to the Uganda Martyrs at Mu-



The participants

nyonyo, on October 28, the formators left for their respective homes. Everyone participated seriously in every phase of this intensive week of listening, prayer, and discussion.

There were moments of prayer during the Assembly and some recreation time to visit the friars' presences in Uganda and the National Shrine of Namugongo. The Ugandan friars created an atmosphere of fraternal hospitality which made these days of study and sharing even more fruitful.

Uganda: Consecration of the Shrine's Church

■ Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI

On October 28, 2017—exactly two years after Pope Francis' historic visit to the National Shrine of the Ugandan Martyrs in Munyonyo—a ceremony was held to consecrate the Shrine's church.

The Mass of Consecration was presided over by His Eminence Fernando Cardinal FILONI, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Those taking part in the Mass included the Most Reverend Michael BLUME, Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda; the Most Reverend Ciprian Kizito LWANGA, Archbishop of Kampala; Friar Marian GOŁĄB, the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Anthony and Bl. James of Strepar in Poland (Cracow); Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI, the Assistant General for the African Federation of Conventual Franciscans (AFCOF) and all of the AFCOF Superiors and formators who were in Munyonyo, at the time, for their annual assembly.

The Archdiocese has entrusted the Shrine to the pastoral care of the Conventual Friars Minor. The friars serve Munyonyo's local Christians (in the parish) as well as the many pilgrims who regularly visit this holy place. This place is consecrated by the noble blood of three martyrs who gave their lives on these grounds.

In all, twenty-two Ugandan martyrs were canonized by Paul VI in 1964. Many of the martyrs were still children. They had rejected the sexual demands of the immoral King Mwanga and preferred to die rather than betray the values of the Gospel (1886). The enraged king commanded they be tortured, cut to pieces and burned alive. The martyrdoms began at Munyonyo, where three of them died, and was completed in Namugongo—where there are two other shrines: one Catholic and the other Anglican. The martyrs were from various denominations.

Prior to the liturgy, the Cardinal met with catechists and formators from all over the country who had gathered at the Shrine for their annual assembly. The church is erected on the site of the martyrdoms and is where all the county's catechists, and other leaders, usually gather for formation events and various other initiatives.

The friars also built a house next to the Shrine which serves as the headquarters for religious formation for the Order's candidates and the country's leaders.



Solemn liturgy

Burkina Faso: Recognition for the Franciscans

■ Friar Tadeusz ŚWIĄTKOWSKI

On December 5, 2017, the Conventual Franciscan friars in Burkina Faso were collectively awarded the honorary title of Knight of the Order of Merit of Burkina Faso (Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite du Burkina Faso). The decoration is a sign of gratitude for the service our Order has rendered.

The friars were honored for their contribution to the country's development through the work they do at the St. Maximilian KOLBE Medical Center in Sabou.

Normally this decoration is given only to individuals, but on this occasion, it was in recognition of the Institution. The ceremony took place in the garden of the presidential palace. Those attending included the President of the country, the Prime Minister, and members of the government and diplomatic corps. Friar Marek HRYNIEWICKI, the Provincial Delegate for Burkina Faso, together with Friar Benedict Yaw OFOSU, affiliated with the Province of St. Anthony of Padua in Ghana, accepted the medal.

The Medical Center, directed by Friar Tomasz KRET, is sponsored in particular by its volunteers and then by various research organizations headed by the Province of Abruzzo.

Currently there are two friaries in Burkina Faso. The friary in Sabou manages a parish and the Medical Center. The friary in Ouagadougou operates as a formation house. The friars working in Burkina Faso come from two Jurisdictions: the Province of St. Bernardine and St. Angelo in Italy (Abruzzo) and the Province of the Immaculate Mother of God in Poland (Warsaw).

As far as local vocations are concerned, one Burkinabe has already been ordained to the priesthood and there is a large number of young men in initial formation. Burkinabe postulants undertake their formation in Saltpond, Ghana. Novices go to Accra, Ghana, philosophy students study in Nairobi, Kenya, and theology students study in Rome, Italy.



The medal

The friars of Burkina Faso with the two Ministers Provincial

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CENTRALIS EUROPAE FOEDERATIO

Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ
Assistant General for the CEF



Germany: Visit to the Romanian Friars

■ Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ

On October 23-27, 2017, Friar Joaquin Ángel AGESTA, the Assistant General for the Federazione Inter-mediterranea Ministri Provinciali (FIMP); and Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, the Assistant General for the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF), visited the presences of the Romanian friars in Germany.

The Romanian presences are located in southern Germany-Bavaria, near the Maria Eck friary in the Province of Saint Elisabeth in Germany.

They are found at the villages of Bergen, Grabenstät and Chieming, near Lake Chiemsee. This area has eight friars from the Province of St. Joseph, Spouse of the B.V.M. in Romania. They are led by Gabriel BUDAU, who is the Provincial Delegate and a pastor. The friars serve two parish units; each has four villages with churches that used to be autonomous parishes. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the current status of these presences and to talk to the friars about the future of their mission in Germany.

In addition to these eight friars, there were two more at the friary in Cologne (Province of Germany). One works as the Assistant Pastor of St. Kolumba parish and is a confessor at the Minoritenkirche. The other is studying German and is preparing for ministry in Germany. The two Assistants General met with the Romanian Provincial Delegate, as well. He resides in the same community.

On the last day, the Minister Provincial of the Province of Germany, Friar Bernhardin SEITHER, joined the meeting and the friars discussed closer and more meaningful collaboration between the Provinces of Romania and Germany. The meeting was very fruitful and enjoyable for both the Assistants General and the local friars.



The Romanian friars
in Germany

Austria: CEF Assembly in Vienna

■ Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ

On November 5-9, 2017, an Assembly of the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF) was held at the Holy Trinity friary in Vienna, Austria.

Nearly all of the Federation members participated in the Assembly which was headed by the CEF President, Friar Bernhardin SEITHER. Friar Joseph NILSSON, the Delegate for the Order's presence in Scandinavia, was absent due to health problems.

The main topic was the revision of the General Statutes (Part II).

After this discussion, as usual, the members exchanged news from their Jurisdictions and gained deeper insight answering the question: "What gave me joy and what was more difficult this year?"

In addition to these issues, Friar Bernhardin updated the members and gave his impressions concerning the annual meeting of the President of the Federation with the Government of the Order, which was held last June. After that, the Assistant General for the CEF, Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, updated those present with the latest news from the General Curia, especially as it related to the Order's presence in this part of Europe.

The next meetings of the Federation were scheduled along with the Federation's post-novice gatherings over the next two years.

The Assembly concluded with a discussion on "How do we rate the quality of life in our Jurisdictions and in our Federation?"

The afternoon was dedicated to visiting the city of Vienna and watching an audio-visual presentation on its history, called: "Journey through Time".

Finally, the members of the CEF and the Viennese community shared some moments of prayer and fraternal agape. Everyone thanked the Custos of Austria-Switzerland, Friar Danielle BROCCA, for his hospitality.



The participants

cef@ofmconv.net

Croatia: Provincial Assembly

■ Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ

On November 22, 2017, the last of four planned Provincial assemblies was held at the Holy Spirit friary in Zagreb, Croatia. The theme of this assembly concerned the priorities and future of the Province of St. Jerome in Croatia.

A small group of friars came together under the leadership of the Vicar Provincial, Friar Martin JAKOVIĆ and the Assistant General for the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF), Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ.

All those present were meeting for the first time since they had been unable to attend any of the previously scheduled assemblies, which began in the spring of 2017. The assemblies were helpful in preparing for the next Ordinary Provincial Chapter. The Chapter is scheduled for the beginning of February 2018.

Two days later, on November 24, a new fresco called “St. Anthony in Glory” was blessed at the church of St. Anthony, which lies next to the Holy Spirit friary. This event coincided with the anniversary of the consecration of the church. The blessing took place during a Mass presided over by the Most Reverend Antun ŠKVORCEVIC, Bishop of Požega. The fresco is the work of the artist Tihomir LONČAR, a member of the local parish. Those concelebrating included the friars of the local friary led by their guardian, Friar Tomislav GLAVNIK, the Pastor, Friar Martin JAKOVIĆ and other pastors in the area.



Solemn liturgy

Germany: Fraternal Visits

■ Friar Andreas MURK, Provincial Secretary

During the last two weeks of November, 2017, Friar Bernhardin M. SEITHER, the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Elizabeth in Germany, visited four of the Province’s five friaries.

The Minister Provincial visited the friaries at Cologne, Maria Eck, Schönau and Schwarzenberg. At each location, he took time to speak to individual friars and participate in a friary house chapter—or at least a community meeting. His meetings with individual friars at the

friary in Würzburg are yet to occur. However, so far, the friars seem content with their personal situation and the overall status of the Province.

These visits were conducted after the first half of the current four-year term, as a means to strengthen the bonds between the friars and their Province and to give the Provincial government a deeper understanding of the current status of the friaries.

During the last two years, a major effort has been underway to give the friars more chances to meet each other at other friaries. At the last Provincial Chapter, it was decided that all friars under the age of sixty-five would be obliged to spend about a week at another friary as a kind of “missionary experience”. So far, the feedback has been very positive about this decision. Last summer, a good number of friars took part in a five-day trip to Poland. Besides visiting Cracow and Harmęże, they also went to the famous shrine of Częstochowa. Last October, the German Province conducted a big event; it convened a Chapter of Mats and invited the friars of the four Provinces (three Polish Provinces and the Province of Romania) who live and work in Germany, in their own friaries. Despite the Jurisdictional questions, which remain somewhat vague, the atmosphere among the friars was very enjoyable and the relationships were quite deep after so many years of mission together as Conventual Franciscans in Germany.

Germany: Meeting with the Definitory

■ Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ

On December 20, 2017, Friar Joaquín AGESTA, the Assistant General for the Federazione Inter-mediterranea Ministri Provinciali (FIMP) and Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, the Assistant General for the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF) met with the Definitory of the Province of St. Elizabeth in Germany.

The meeting took place at the Mary Help of Christians friary and formation house in Schwarzenberg, Germany.

All of the Definitors were present along with the Minister Provincial, Friar Bernhardin SEITHER. The topic of the meeting was about future collaboration between the Provinces of Germany and Romania. Given the breadth and complexity of this subject, a proposal was made to create an *ad hoc* team, which will carry out the work planned for the future. The team will consist of at least one Definitor per Province, in addition to both of the aforementioned Assistants General.

Prior to this meeting, Friar Bernhard Johannes SCHULTE, the Vatican Penitentiary for the German language, was transferred from St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome to Maria Eck in Germany.

In the end, both Assistants General went by minibus to the friary in Flüeli-Ranft, Switzerland, where they picked up luggage belonging to Friar Vincent COSATTI. Friar Vincent is the new Vatican Penitentiary for the French and German languages and has already started his new assignment at the Vatican Penitentiary.



The Provincial Definitory with the two Assistants General

CONVENTUAL FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

Friar Jude WINKLER
Assistant General for the CFF



USA: CFF Formation Assembly

■ Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, SGF Secretary General

On Wednesday, October 11, 2017, Ministers Provincial, formation directors and leaders in vocation ministry (the Presidents of Commissions for Formation) from all over the North American Federation, met in Marytown, Libertyville, Illinois, USA, for a formation assembly.

The primary task of the meeting was to prepare a final draft of the CFF Formation Directory Initiative, to be approved by the Provincial Chapters of 2018. There were twenty participants from various parts of the Federation. The meeting was led by Friars Brad MILUNSKI and Jim KENT, President of the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF).

The working day began with a presentation by Friar Louis PANTHIRUVELIL, Secretary General for Formation (SGF). Friar Louis presented various formation initiatives of the Order currently underway, and indicated some updates regarding the revision of the main document of the Order on formation, *Franciscan Discipleship*, to be presented at the 2019 Ordinary General Chapter. The meeting was enlivened with reflections, concrete proposals, corrections and modifications of the draft prepared by the friars responsible for initial formation in the CFF.

The CFF Federation has five common formation houses:

- Two postulancy houses: St. Bonaventure Friary, Chicago (Illinois, USA) and Blessed Agnelus of Pisa Friary (Oxford, Great Britain)
- One novitiate: St. Joseph of Cupertino Friary, Arroyo Grande (California, USA)
- Two post-novitiate houses: San Damiano Friary, San Antonio (Texas, USA) and St. Bonaventure Friary, Silver Spring (Maryland, USA)

After the formation assembly, Friar Louis visited the friars from India working as vocation animators at Bellarmine University (Louisville, Kentucky, USA), in collaboration with the Province of Our Lady of Consolation (OLC).

Thanks to the Marytown friars for their warm hospitality and sincere appreciation to the friars who work so hard for the common formation project and the CFF Directory.



The participants

USA: CFF Assembly in Santa Fe

■ Friar Jude WINKLER

On October 23-26, 2017, the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF) met for its semi-annual assembly in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. Santa Fe is a city with historic ties to the Franciscan Order, the friars having arrived there in 1610.

All of the members were present with the exception of the Delegate of Australia who was unable to attend.

Friar Jim KENT, the President of the CFF, led discussions on initial and ongoing formation, preparations for the USA Provincial Chapters to be held in April of 2018, and the Extraordinary Chapter to be held next summer which will address the revision of the Constitutions, the Militia of the Immaculate, the Secular Franciscan Order and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

The friars visited the Miraculous Staircase in the chapel of the Sisters of Loretto, a staircase built by a mysterious carpenter which is a marvel of construction (the carpenter having disappeared at the end of the project without being paid). Many people wonder whether this mysterious carpenter might have been St. Joseph himself. They also visited the Cathedral/Basilica of St. Francis in Santa Fe and various sites in Taos, New Mexico.

The next meeting of the Federation will be in Rome, in preparation for the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter.



The participants

USA: Commemoration of *Ite Vos* in Chicago

■ Friar Jude WINKLER

On November 4, 2017, over one hundred friars from the Friars Minor, Capuchin and Conventual Families of the First Order gathered at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, USA, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Papal Bull *Ite Vos*.

There were three presentations as part of this workshop. Friar Dominic MONTI, OFM, presented the historic background to *Ite Vos*; Friar Regis ARMSTRONG, OFM Cap., presented common elements of spirituality among the three Orders; and Friar Jude WINKLER, OFM Conv., presented an overview of the forms of collaboration that are already occurring among the Families of the First Order.

There was small group discussion after lunch to talk about possible future forms of collaboration among the Families of the First Order. The event was sponsored by the Federations of the Friars Minor, Capuchins and Conventuals in the United States.



A representative of the OFM Conv.

Canada: Custodial Spiritual Retreat in Montreal

■ Friar Jan ŁEMPICKI, Custodial Secretary

For many years, the friars of the Provincial Custody of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Canada have met regularly on the first Monday of each month for a day of spiritual retreat.

The retreats are organized by Friar Dariusz SZURKO, the Custodial Assistant for Ongoing Formation. The program always includes a Conventual Mass; two spiritual conferences; the Liturgy of the Hours; adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; the Chaplet of Divine Mercy; a meal; and a discussion of current issues in the community.

The retreat rotates between the four religious houses in Montreal. The last one was held on November 6, 2017, at the filial house of the Mission of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe and St Adalbert. The retreat day was led by Friars Piotr MIODEK and Józef BRZOZOWSKI. They shared their impressions of the Holy Land, where they had gone on retreat earlier this year.

The friars of the Custody serving in the United States conduct similar retreats, which are organized by Friar Waław SOKOŁOWSKI, the Custodial Delegate. The Custody of Canada belongs to the Province of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Poland (Gdansk).



The friars of the Custody

USA: Postulancy Workshop in Chicago

■ Friar Jude WINKLER

On November 6-10, 2017, Friar Jude WINKLER presented a workshop to the postulants of the U.S. Provinces of the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF).

The workshop was on the Letters of St. Paul and was presented at the postulancy house in Chicago.

Friar Pascal KOLODZIEJ is the Director of the postulancy program and Friar Edmond DES-FORGES is the Assistant Director.

There are currently seven first-year postulants and one second-year postulant in the program. Five of these are from Our Lady of the Angels Province, one is from Our Lady of Consolation Province, one is from St. Joseph of Cupertino Province and one is from St. Bonaventure Province.

Postulants from the Provincial Custody of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa in Great Britain-Ireland, and the Provincial Delegation of Our Lady Help of Christians in Australia, do not participate in this particular program.



The postulants with their formators and the Assistant General

Canada: Fraternal Visit to Ottawa

■ Friar Jude Winkler

From November 19-22, 2017, Friar Jude WINKLER, OFM Conv., the Assistant General for the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF), visited the newest friary in Ottawa, the capital of Canada.

This is an international friary, with a Canadian, Friar Jobe ABBASS; a Filipino, Friar Dominic LIM; an Indian, Friar Savior KARAMVELIL JACOB; and a Romanian, Friar Jeremiah-Cătălin BUDĂU. The friars were invited to Ottawa by the Most Reverend Terrence Thomas PRENDERGAST, S.J., Archbishop of Ottawa, Ontario.

Friar Dominic is the pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, while Friar Jeremiah is the pastor of St. Ignatius of Antioch Parish. Friar Savior will be working as a chaplain in one of the local hospitals, while Friar Jobe is completing his teaching assignment at St. Paul University.

This is the third friary of the Our Lady of the Angels Province in USA in the territory of Canada.

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FEDERACIÓN CONVENTUALES AMERICA LATINA

Friar Carlos TROVARELLI
Assistant General for the FALC



Brazil: Missionary Meeting in Curitiba

■ Friar Flávio Martins VENÂNCIO

On October 28-29, 2017, a missionary meeting of the Province of St. Francis in Brazil took place at the Casa São Francisco de Assis in Curitiba, Paraná State, Brazil.

Those attending the event included aspirants, postulants and clerical students, as well as young people from our communities.

Sister Maria ROSELI, of the Angelica Sisters, conducted meditations.

This was a time of intensive prayer, fraternity and joy, born of our being missionaries in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.



The participants

Chile: Franciscan Youth Meeting

■ Friar Jack GINTING

On October 27-29, 2017, the Franciscan Youth of Curicó, Santiago and Copiapo, Chile, gathered at the parish church of Jesus of Nazareth in Curicó to share a few days of fraternity and prayer.

The purpose of the meeting was to make proper preparations for Pope Francis' visit to Chile in mid-January of 2018.

One hundred and fifty young people participated, guided by the Friars Minor Conventual of the communities of Copiapo, Santiago and Curicó.

During the meeting, the young people participated in personal and group formation, Franciscan spirituality, Masses and fraternal discussion. These various activities helped the young people strengthen their faith and get their minds and hearts prepared for the Holy Father's apostolic visit to Chile.

Accepting St. Francis' invitation and following his example, the young people drew up a personal life plan, an itinerary they would faithfully follow, in order to stay on the path and to experience the true joy of the Gospel.

The young people returned to their supportive families, enthusiastic about being missionaries and protagonists in today's society and in history, as Pope Francis so often invites us to be.

Chile: Visit of the Minister Provincial

■ Friar Jack GINTING

On November 3-15, 2017, the Minister Provincial of the Italian Province of St. Anthony of Padua, Friar Giovanni VOLTAN, visited the Delegation of Chile, where by mandate of the Provincial Chapter, he will appoint the guardians of the communities.

After listening to each of the friars during his visit to the three communities in Chile, the Minister Provincial participated in the Delegation's meeting held November 13-15, in Copiapó.

For the first two days of the meeting, the friars worked in study groups on the Four-Year Plan of the Delegation. They took inspiration from a reflection presented by the Minister Provincial and, in particular, from the results of the work that was done during the formation weeks held in 2015 and 2017.

On the last day, the Minister Provincial issued his obediences to the friars regarding the composition of the communities for the new four-year term. Then, he proposed Friar Tullio PASTORELLI as the new Delegate. The friars voted and confirmed him. It is now up to the Provincial Definitory to confirm the Delegate and to make the official appointments of the new guardians. The guardians will take office at the start of the new four-year term on February 15, 2018, one of the feast days of St. Anthony of Padua.

At the end of the meeting, the Minister Provincial and the friars thanked Friar Maurizio BRIDIO for his dedicated and passionate service as Delegate for the last 12 years.

During the intercommunity meeting, Salvatore and Angela MACA, members of a *Fidei Donum* missionary family, made a presentation on their experience doing four years of missionary service at the "Hacienda San Pedro" in Copiapó. They will return to Italy next February, along with their two sons, Giuseppe and Soave, where they will make themselves available for another service experience in collaboration with the Italian Province of St. Anthony.



The participants with the Minister Provincial

Mexico: Province Celebrations

■ Friar Fausto de Jesús RAMÍREZ ROSARIO, Provincial Secretary

During November and December of 2017, the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico celebrated some special events along its daily journey as a Provincial fraternity.

On November 15, 2017, Friar Cornelio MORÁN RÍOS celebrated his fifteenth anniversary of priestly ordination. The event took place in the town of "Cruz Alta" (Guerrero-Mexico). Those present included the Minister Provincial, Friar Mario CASTRO MARTÍNEZ and the Provincial Econom, Friar Alfredo MEDRANO GALVÁN. They were both in the state of Guerrero visiting the friaries at Acapulco, Tlacoachistlahuaca and Xochistlahuaca. Several friars of the Province

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attended along with relatives, friends and the local faithful. Friar Cornelio presided over Mass.

On November 20, 2017, the Province celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the arrival of the Friars Minor Conventual in Mexico. The celebrations began with Mass at the parish church of “Cristo del Valle y San Francisco de Asís”. During the Mass, three of our friars consecrated their lives to God through the solemn profession of vows. They were Friars Cristian Ubaldo MARTÍNEZ CASTRO, Florencio TOVAR PÉREZ and César ORTIZ GONZÁLEZ.

The Minister Provincial, Friar Mario CASTRO MARTÍNEZ, presided over the Mass. Among the concelebrants were two of the first Conventual missionaries in Mexico: Friars Antonio BANNÒ VINCI and Calogero DRAGO. In his homily, the Minister Provincial referred to them as “friars who speak little, but work a lot.” He emphasized the ministry they began forty years ago, when they arrived in Mexico from Sicily, accompanied by Friar Corrado INSERRA, of happy memory.

Later, the Minister Provincial addressed the friars who were professing their solemn vows and explained the commitments that the consecrated life requires in everyday life. Finally, he entrusted them to the guidance and mercy of God through the intercession of our Seraphic Father Francis of Assisi and of all the Franciscan saints.

After Mass, friars and parish groups shared a celebratory lunch. Some of the groups, like the Militia of the Immaculate and the Secular Franciscans, had been with the friars since they first came to Mexico.



The friars of the Province

Mexico: Province Advent Retreat

■ Friar Fausto de Jesús RAMÍREZ ROSARIO, Provincial Secretary

On December 6, 2017, the friars of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico held their annual Advent retreat at the friary of “Cristo del Valle y San Francisco de Asís” in Valle de Aragón, State of Mexico.

The retreat began at 10:00 a.m. under the leadership of Friar Rubén MARTÍNEZ HERNÁNDEZ. It used *Lectio Divina* to explore the theme “The Life of Union with God”.

Another topic focused on the importance of prayer in the life of St. Francis. The steps of *Lectio Divina* were shared, based on the writings of His Eminence, Carlo Cardinal M. MARTINI. Friar Rubén presented a broad overview of *Lectio Divina*, which will certainly help the friars get even closer to our Lord and have a more intimate and profound relationship with Him. Sacred Scripture is the common thread that binds these elements together. The Word was very important in the life of St. Francis and it plays the leading role in *Lectio Divina*. There was a strong incentive to give the Word of God the same importance in fraternal and community life.

Later, the friars used *Lectio Divina* to explore the text of Mark 1:1-8, the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Advent.

The retreat ended with Mass presided over by Friar Ramón CAMACHO OCAMPO, President of the Commission for Ongoing Formation. Afterwards, the participating friars returned to their communities.



The friars during prayer

Mexico: Meeting with the Novices

■ Friar Franklin DURÁN ZAMBRANO, FALC Formation Assistant

On December 19-30, 2017, Friar Franklin DURÁN ZAMBRANO, the Formation Assistant for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC) met with the novices of Mexico at the San Guillermo novitiate friary in Totolapan, Morelos State, Mexico. They spent time in formation and celebrated Christmas together.

During this formation period, the friars met together several times to discuss various themes. One was “The New Paradigms of Franciscan Formation”. Another was “The Path of Holiness as a Challenge and Proposal for New Generations of Youth in Formation”. There was a presentation on the Order’s vision regarding formation and the Order’s mission in Latin America. Finally, there was some time for personal reflection and group work. Fraternal joy was evident throughout the meeting and was appreciated by all.

The meeting also gave the friars an opportunity to share some fraternal time together, especially in light of the strong earthquake they experienced on September 19, 2017, which registered 7.1 on the Richter scale. The friars are doing well, thank God, and are continuing the activities of the Conventual and novitiate life as best they can. Currently, they reside in a building located a few meters from the old friary which was destroyed by the earthquake. A new, more modest building is currently under construction, so that the stable community can live together with the novices. It is worth noting how happy and hopeful the novices are as they carry out their activities.

At the end of this formation week, the friars thanked God for the time they spent together and the fraternity they shared.



The novices

FEDERATION OF ASIAN MINOR CONVENTUALS



Friar Benedict Seung Jae BAEK
Assistant General for the FAMC

Japan: 2017 FAMC Meeting

■ Friar Benedict BAEK

On November 6-10, 2017, a meeting of the Federation of Asian Minor Conventual (FAMC) was held at the Seibono Kishi friary in Nagasaki, Japan.

The meeting was focused on preparations for the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter.

Friar Timothy KULBICKI, a member of the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) presented the new Constitutions that are being revised and other important topics for the 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter.

On Wednesday, November 8, the friars visited sites related to the Japanese martyrs and St. Maximilian Kolbe. They also visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum.



The participants

Korea: Ongoing Formation

■ Friar Benedict BAEK

On November 20-24, 2017, the Province of Korea held an Ongoing Formation Week at the retreat center of the Clerical Congregation of the Blessed Korean Martyrs, on the island of Jeju.

Thirty-six solemnly professed friars from the Province participated in this formation course. The general program was organized by the Provincial Formation Commission. The first two days of the program featured a Mass with the Poor Clares; a conference on

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the spirituality of St. Clare offered by Sr. Maria; and a presentation on the history of the local church on Jeju Island by Mr. Athanasius KIM, a member of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS).

The remaining days were led by Fr. Peter KIM, a young priest of the Clerical Congregation of the Blessed Korean Martyrs

The program included a visit to the shrine of the martyrs on the island and the island's first church; a visit to a Marian shrine and the trail of the martyrs; a visit to the museum of Jeju; a Mass for peace with diocesan priest Fr. Paul MOON on the street in front of the naval base of Kang-Jung. After the Mass there was a demonstration.

The 2017 Ongoing Formation Week ended on Friday, November 24, with a Mass presided over by the Minister Provincial, Friar Marco JEONG.

Japan: Fraternal Assembly

■ Friar Benedict BAEK

On November 21-23, 2017 a fraternal assembly was held at the Seibono Kishi friary in Nagasaki, Japan.

Nearly two thirds of the solemnly professed friars from the Province (30 friars) were present. Two foreign friars attended: Friar Petre IȘTOC from Romania and Friar Andrea KIM from Korea.

On the first day, the Minister Provincial talked about the status of the decisions which were made at the 2017 Ordinary Provincial Chapter. Next, a report was made on various Provincial commissions.

On the second day there were two presentations: the first, by the Minister Provincial of the Friars Minor in Japan, Friar Yoshitaka MURAKAMI, was about fraternity. The second, by Friar Raffaele DI MURO, was about the history and status of the Militia of the Immaculate (M.I.).

On the last day, various anniversaries were celebrated. The Most Reverend Toshio OSHIKAWA, Bishop of Naha, Japan, presided over the Mass. Those with anniversaries included Bishop OSHIKAWA and Friar Damianus SAKIHAMA who both celebrated fifty years of priestly ordination. Friars Michael SAITO and Friar Salesius YAMASHITA celebrated fifty years since they made their temporary profession and Friar Maximilianus Kolbe SHIMOMURA celebrated twenty-five years since his temporary profession.



The honorees

FEDERATIO EUROPAE MEDIAE ET ORIENTALIS

Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI
Assistant General for the FEMO



Bulgaria: FEMO Meeting

■ Friar Leszek M. ŁUCZKANIN

On October 23-28, 2017, a meeting of the Federatio Europae Mediae et Orientalis (FEMO) was held at the friary in Rakovski, Bulgaria. Representatives from almost every Jurisdiction of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in eastern and central Europe participated.

Those present included: the Assistant General for the FEMO, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI; the FEMO President and Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Poland (Gdansk), Friar Jan MACIEJOWSKI; the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Anthony and Bl. James of Strepar in Poland (Cracow), Friar Marian GOŁĄB; the Minister Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Mother of God in Poland (Warsaw), Friar Wiesław PYZIO; the Minister Provincial of the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Czech Republic, Friar Stanisław GRYŃ; the Custos of the General Custody of Our Holy Father St. Francis in Russia, Friar Nikolay DUBININ; the Custos of the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. in Slovakia, Friar Tomáš LESŇÁK; the Delegate of the Provincial Delegation in Belarus, Friar Antoni POŹECKI; the Delegate of the Provincial Delegation in Bulgaria, Friar Jarosław BARTKIEWICZ; the Delegate of the Provincial Delegation in Lithuania, Friar Piotr STROCEŃ; the Delegate of the Provincial Delegation in Uzbekistan, Friar Stanisław ROCHOWIAK; the Superior of the General Mission in Kazakhstan, Friar Miha Benedikt MAJETIČ; and the Secretary of the FEMO, Friar Leszek M. ŁUCZKANIN.

The main theme of the meeting was the revision of the draft of the new General Statutes. Some current issues were also discussed.

The Secretary of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Orders in Poland, Friar Kazimierz MALINOWSKI, OFM Conv., was present for part of the meeting.

The meeting ended with a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, located at our friary in Pleven.



Members of the Federation

Russia: Canonical Visitation

■ Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI

From November 1-20, 2017, Friar Jacek CIUPIŃSKI, the Assistant General for the Federatio Europae Mediae et Orientalis (FEMO) made a general canonical visitation to the General Custody of Our Holy Father St. Francis in Russia.

During his stay, the Visitor met all the friars in their friaries. Currently, the Custody has four canonically erected friaries: Moscow, Astrahan, Czerniakovsk and St. Petersburg. There is also a filial house in Kaluga. Fourteen friars and three postulants live in the Custody.

The canonical visitation will conclude after the Visitor meets with the Custodial Definitory on December 13-14, 2017, in St. Petersburg



The communities in Czerniakovsk and Astrahan



The communities in St. Petersburg and Moscow

Rome: New Doctor of Biblical Sciences

■ Friar Piotr SZCZEPAŃSKI, Vicar Provincial of Warsaw

The Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome trains exegetes of Holy Scripture. It is a university that is recognized around the world.

Friar Tomasz SZYMCZAK, OFM Conv., has been studying there for the last few years. He is a member of the Province of the Immaculate Mother of God in Poland (Warsaw).

On Tuesday, December 18, 2017, he publically defended his doctoral thesis, entitled "The Reception of the Gospel of Matthew in the Vetus Syra Texts".

His doctoral thesis was developed under the direction of Professor Craig MORRISON, O. Carm. The members of the examination committee rated Friar Tomasz's dissertation as exceptional and gave their consent for its publication.

During a dinner held at the International Seraphicum College, Professor MORRISON mentioned that Friar Tomasz's doctorate was the only one this year to be awarded a summa cum laude commendation.

It is with great joy that we congratulate Friar Tomasz on his scientific achievement. May the light of the Word of God guide him along the path of his priestly, professional and Franciscan life.



Friar Tomasz SZYMCZAK

FEDERAZIONE INTER-MEDITERRANEA MINISTRI PROVINCIALI

Friar Joaquín Ángel AGESTA CUEVAS
Assistant General for the FIMP



Romania: A Series of Meetings

■ Friar Joaquin Ángel AGESTA CUEVAS

On October 30, 2017, Friar Miljenko HONTIĆ, the Assistant General for the Centralis Europae Foederatio (CEF) and Friar Joaquín Ángel AGESTA CUEVAS, the Assistant General for the Federazione Inter-mediterranea Ministri Provinciali (FIMP) met with the Provincial Definitory of the Province of St. Joseph, Spouse of the B.V.M. in Romania.

The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the status of the Romanian friars' mission in Germany. The meeting also included some time for fraternity which everyone enjoyed.

On the morning of October 30, a presentation was made of a Romanian translation of the biography of our confrere, Servant of God Friar Martin BENEDICT. The original was written in Italian by Angelo MONTONATI. The translation was presented in the Servant of God's home town of Galbeni, Moldova, in the town's secondary school named in his memory. This event was organized by Friar Eusebio BEJAN, the Provincial Postulator for the cause of saints. Those attending included some local civil authorities: the Mayor, the Head Mistress of the school and the teaching staff. A large number of friars from Roman and Bacau were present, along with students from the school.

On the same day, a large portrait depicting Benedict's face was unveiled; it was painted on one of the walls by a professor of the school together with some students.

The event concluded with lunch and a visit to the family home of our confrere, whose path toward sainthood continues.



Some friars with the Assistant General

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Romania: Formation Meeting

■ Friar Virgil BLAJ, Provincial Secretary

On November 7-9, 2017, a formation meeting for the friars of the Province of St. Joseph, Spouse of the B.V.M. in Romania took place at the St. Joseph friary (Provincial curia) in Bacău.

The program of the meeting, organized in three stages, included two reflections presented by Friar Lucian HORLESCU and Friar Ștefan ACATRINEI, on the role of affection in fraternal relations and the topicality of the figure and charism of St. Francis.

Later on, the assembly went on a pilgrimage to Galbeni, to the house and the grave of the Servant of God, Friar and Doctor, Martin BENEDICT. There was a visit to the cemetery in Valea Mare to pray to the tomb of Franciscan Bishop Ioan DUMA and other friars buried there.

At the beginning of each meeting, Friar Adrian-Sorin GIURGI, Chairman of the Commission for Ongoing Formation, contextualized and enlivened the initiative. He took inspiration from the words of Pope Francis expressed at no. 87 of *Evangelii Gaudium*: "Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a "mystique" of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled!"

The two reflections and the visits to the tombs of the friars who lived their faith and their Franciscan vocation in times of suffering and persecution, gave those present an opportunity to reinvigorate the components of fraternal life and Christian and Franciscan identity. The meeting was a time of coming together and sharing, of communication and of joy, of solidarity and encouragement. It confirmed the truth and the timeliness of Pope Francis's words: "To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us. To be self-enclosed is to taste the bitter poison of immanence, and humanity will be worse for every selfish choice we make." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 87).



The participants

France: 500 Years after the Bull *Ite Vos*

■ Friar François-Xavier BUSTILLIO, Custos

On November 20-26, 2017, Friars Minor, Capuchin and Conventual in France gathered together to proclaim peace.

Twelve Friars Minor, Capuchin and Conventual came together to proclaim the Gospel in the heart of the city of Lyon. They were inspired by this year's 800th anniversary celebrations commemorating the arrival of the first Franciscans in France. Since the twelfth century, Lyon has always had an active Franciscan presence of consecrated and secular brothers and sisters.

In 1517, Pope Leo X officially recognized the different branches within the Order of Friars Minor. Recalling that event in 2017, the Franciscans wanted to emphasize what really unites them: their dedication to reach out toward those they recognize as brothers.

During this mission called "Brothers in the City", the friars greeted each other at the Cathedral of St. John, one of the oldest churches in the country. The twelve participants then met with young people at a middle school run by the Marist Fathers and walked two by two, through the streets of old Lyon, just as Jesus taught his disciples to do. The friars came together to receive, share and proclaim the peace that comes from God.

Numerous other events were organized: there was a conference by His Eminence, Philippe Cardinal BARBARIN; a concert by guitarist and singer Friar Jacques JOUET, OFM; a praise and adoration meeting at the Eglise Lyon Centre; and a prayer vigil with local associations for "the drying of tears". Finally, there was the show "Francis, the Joy of the Gospel", which was produced and staged by the Franciscan Family of Cholet.

All the news about this mission can be found on Facebook: *Fraternels dans la ville* (Brothers in the City).



Representatives of the three families

Italy: A Conventual National President of the C.N.E.C.

■ Editorial Board

Friar Antonio DI MARCANTONIO from the Italian Province of St. Francis of the Friars Minor Conventual was reelected National President of the National Center for Community Econs (C.N.E.C.) at its recent assembly held in Rome.

The organization has about 1,500 members and provides assistance, guidance and support for Community Econs.

Friar Antonio professed his solemn vows on October 22, 1963, and was ordained a priest on March 18, 1967. He was a member of the former OFM Conventual Province of Tuscany and performed a special ministry at the Sacro Convento in Assisi as a co-director for youth and vocation ministry. In recent years, he served as the guardian of the friary of Santa Croce in Florence, Italy.



Friar Antonio DI MARCANTONIO

Turkey: Christmas at Istanbul's Basilica of St. Anthony

■ Friar Anton BULAI

Inside our church, we emphasize all of the liturgical seasons with decorations that signify what the Church is celebrating.

The short Advent and Christmas seasons usually take place within a month and a half. However, the Friars Minor Conventual celebrate them with meditations lasting almost three months.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that St. Francis loved this time of year. He celebrated the Child Jesus joyfully and tenderly, as he did at Greccio. The second is that, for us, it is an occasion to proclaim to our Muslim brothers that "in times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son" (Hebrews 1:1-2), who now passes from the state of being the Divine Word to that of being flesh.

Today, the crib of the Nativity Scene contains the Holy Scriptures. Tomorrow it will hold the divine Child. Now, the crib contains our faith and hope and, after experiencing these two theological virtues, tomorrow we will find the greatest virtue, love itself. Jesus says: "*Ero cras*" ["Tomorrow I will come"], to those who will be coming back to celebrate Christmas. This event takes place at the Franciscan Nativity Scene, in the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" located in front of the Basilica of St. Anthony in Beyoğlu, Turkey.

The courtyard at St. Anthony's architecturally and spiritually embraces all those who pass under the portico. The portico leads them from the street into a common space for the people. Our first proclamation takes place in this courtyard. It is where we proclaim the incarnation of the Son of God with a simple and clear evangelical Nativity Scene. Mary and Joseph wait by the crib and, at the same time, they silently proclaim the birth of the *Verbum caro factum est*.

Several feet away, on the opposite side of the courtyard, like it or not, is the statue "Twisted Crucifix" by the artist Wim DELVOYE. It expresses another birth, the painful one, suffered by the One who was born exclusively for our salvation.

These two "Advents" of Jesus, his birth and crucifixion, follow each other under the gaze of the Immaculate, who appears as a mosaic in the lunette above the church door. The Virgin is shown with her arms down at her sides and her palms open, indicating the birth and the crucifixion. At the same time, she is seen as a patroness welcoming all who enter the courtyard. She invites us to go into the church in order to more fully discover the mystery of Christmas.

Whoever goes into the church cannot fail to notice the Advent wreaths on the columns. Lit up, the wreaths look like royal crowns proclaiming: "The righteous live forever, and in the Lord is their recompense...therefore shall they receive the splendid crown, the beautiful diadem, from the hand of the Lord" (Wisdom 5:15-16). The wreaths also point to the two Christmas trees on the altar. They burn like the burning bush in the desert (with light bulbs), causing the spectator to say to himself, as Moses did: "I must turn aside to look at this remarkable sight" (Exodus 3:3). Those who come closer discover not only the trees, but also a larger, more elaborate Nativity Scene, which says something extra about the person of Jesus and his birth. This is a Nativity Scene for believers.

Thus, the Friars Minor Conventual, on the *calenda*, December 24, solemnly proclaimed Christmas to the citizens of Istanbul: "For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord" (Luke 2:11).

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Argentina-Uruguay: Extraordinary Chapter

■ Friar Lindor Alcides TOFFUL, Chapter Secretary

On October 11-12, 2017, an Extraordinary Provincial Chapter of the “Rioplatsense” Province of St. Anthony of Padua (Argentina and Uruguay) took place at the “San Francisco de Asís” Friary in Moreno, Buenos Aires province, Argentina.

The theme of the Chapter was: “The Economic Status of the Province”.

The Chapter was enhanced by the invaluable presence of the General Procurator, Friar Maurizio DI PAOLO, the General Exactor, Friar Wojciech KULIG, and the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC), Friar Carlos TROVARELLI.

The Chapter also served as an occasion to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the presence, mission and testimony of the Conventual Friars Minor in the Rio de la Plata region. This commemoration was celebrated with gratitude at the Shrine of “Nuestra Señora de Luján”, the patron saint of Argentina, and ended with a festive lunch for all the friars.



The Capitulars

Brazil: Extraordinary Chapter

■ Friar Rafael NORMANDO, Provincial Secretary

On October 23-27, 2017, the Province of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in Brazil celebrated its Extraordinary Provincial Chapter.

The Chapter took place at the St. Bonaventure friary in Brasilia.

Its theme was: “Building Fraternity: Ways to Better Lead a Fraternal Life”. The motto was “Freely you have received, freely given”. Most of the friars of the Province were present.

Also present were Friar Carlos TROVARELLI, the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC) and Friar Wojciech KULIG, the General Exactor.

We thank God for this time of fraternity.



The Capitulars

The Philippines: Ordinary Chapter – Part 1

■ Friar Emmanuel L. GIVA Jr., Custodial Secretary

On October 23-27, 2017, the Provincial Custody of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza in the Philippines held the first part of its Eighth Ordinary Custodial Chapter at the St. Maximilian Kolbe friary in Parañaque City.

In attendance were the Minister Provincial of the Province of Our Seraphic Father St. Francis in Italy (Naples), Friar Cosimo ANTONINO; the Assistant General for the Federation of Asian Minor Conventuals (FAMC), Friar Benedict BAEK, a Philippine Provincial Definitor, Friar Ireneus DAEP and thirty-five Philippine Capitulars who actively participated in all the sessions.

During the second session, reports were presented by the Minister Provincial, the FAMC General Assistant, the Provincial Custos and the Custodial Econom. Likewise, the friars made an evaluation of the past four-year term and presented a collated written report of the evaluation during the plenary assembly.

During the third session, which fell on the feast day of the secondary patron of the Custody, Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza, Friar Francis Victor MATEO was elected Provincial Custos for a second term on the first ballot.

During the fourth session, the Capitulars elected the Custodial Definitors namely: Friar Emmanuel GIVA Jr., (second term) was also elected as Custodial Vicar; Friar Daniel SUGATAN (first term) was chosen as Custodial Secretary; Friar Mariel SANTOS (first term) and Friar Pascual RAMOS (third term). Friar John Vianney ACOSTA and Friar Andrew DATOY were elected Custodial Exactor and Econom respectively.

The second part of the Ordinary Custodial Chapter will be held on January 22-26, 2018, at the St. Maximilian friary in Parañaque City, the Philippines.



Friar Francis Victor MATEO
Custos



The Definitors with the Custos
and the Minister Provincial



The Capitulars

CHAPTERS

Colombia: Ordinary Chapter – Part I

■ Friar Felipe GÉNEZ SOLÓRZANO

On November 6-10, 2017, the Provincial Custody of St. Francis of Assisi in Colombia celebrated its seventh Ordinary Custodial Chapter.

All of the solemnly professed friars of the Custody were present.

The Chapter was presided over by Friar Ángel Mariano GUZMÁN, the Minister Provincial of the Mother Province of Our Lady of Montserrat in Spain. Also present was Friar Julián PASCUAL, the Provincial Econom, along with Friar Carlos TROVARELLI, the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC).

Friar José Andrés CASTRO FARAH was elected to his first term as Provincial Custos.

The members of the Custodial Definitory are Friar Sidifredo de la Cruz CHAPARRO GUALDRÓN, Vicar Custos; Friar Pedro Pablo BERMÚDEZ, Custodial Secretary; and Friars Alexander HERNÁNDEZ BLANCO and Francisco Nel LEUDO MURILLO, Definitors.

The first part of the Chapter was carried out in a pleasant, fraternal atmosphere; the participants gathered to evaluate and rethink their lives, and above all, to look to the future, full of hope and deeply grateful to God who has been infinitely generous with all the confreres.



Friar José Andrés
CASTRO FARAH, Custos



The Capitulars

Bolivia: Ordinary Chapter – Part I

■ Friar Carlos TROVARELLI

On November 13-17, 2017, the Custody of St. Francis of Assisi in Bolivia celebrated its ninth Ordinary Custodial Chapter in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia.

The Custody belongs to the Province of St. Anthony of Padua and Bl. James of Strepar in Poland (Cracow).

The Minister Provincial, Friar Marian GOŁĄB, presided over the Chapter. The Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales America Latina (FALC), Friar Carlos TROVARELLI, was also present.

After reviewing all the reports on the last four-year term and writing an evaluation, elections were held.

The new government of the Custody is composed of the following friars: Friar Carlos Antonio CATALÁN, Provincial Custos (first term); Friar Orlando PALMA MONTAÑO, Vicar-Custos; Friar Oscar URÍZAR CAMPOS, Custodial Secretary; Friar Juan KUKLA, Custodial Definitor.

The Capitulars also prioritized major issues the Custody will be facing over the next four years in order to respond in a new and creative way to these social, cultural and ecclesial challenges. The presence of various guests helped strengthen the fraternal communion among



Friar Carlos Antonio
CATALÁN, Custos

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the Friars Minor Conventual in Latin America. They were Friar Aldo CÚCARO, the Minister Provincial of the Rioplatense Province (Argentina-Uruguay); Friar Dariusz MAZUREK, the Delegate of Peru; and Friar Jacek ORZEŁ, the Delegate of Paraguay.

The approval of the Four-Year Custodial Plan, and elections for additional offices, will take place during the second part of the Chapter, which is scheduled for December 11-15, 2017, again in the city of Cochabamba.



The Definitors



The Capitulars

Central America: New Custody and Ordinary Chapter – Part I

■ Friar Carlos TROVARELLI

On December 11-14, 2017, the first Ordinary Custodial Chapter of the new Central American Custody of Mary, Mother of Mercy took place at the La Asunción friary in Alajuela, Costa Rica.

The new Custody belongs to the USA Province of Our Lady of Consolation (OLC). On December 13, 2017, Friar Jorge DOBLES ULLOA was elected the first Provincial Custos.

The Chapter began on the afternoon of Monday, December 11, with half a day of spiritual retreat, led by Friar Delio DIAZ, a friar of the new Custody. The work of the Chapter in particular started on the morning of Tuesday, December 12, after the celebration of Mass on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. At the beginning of the celebration, the solemn inauguration of the new Custody was conducted.

The new Custody is a union of the former Provincial Custody of Mary, Mother of the Poor (Central America) of the USA Province of Our Lady of Consolation (OLC), and the former Provincial Delegation in Costa Rica of the USA Province of Our Lady of the Angels (OLA).

The Chapter was presided over by the Minister General, Friar Marco TASCIA. Others present included the Minister Provincial of the OLC Province, Friar James KENT; the Minister Provincial of the former Delegation, Friar James McCURRY (OLA); the Assistant General for the English-



Friar Jorge DOBLES ULLOA
Custos

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speaking Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF), Friar Jude WINKLER; the Assistant General for the Federación Conventuales América Latina (FALC), Friar Carlos TROVARELLI; and a missionary of the former Custody of Central America and translator during the Chapter, Friar Mark WEAVER.

On the last day, the Most Reverend Enrique MONTERO, Bishop of San Isidro, Costa Rica, visited the Chapter Assembly. He was once a friar of the former Delegation of Costa Rica.

The Custodial Definitory has been formed as follows: Friar Jorge DOBLES ULLOA, Provincial Custos; Friar Isidoro MEJÍA HERNÁNDEZ, Vicar Custos; Friar Marco UMAÑA JUÁREZ, Custodial Secretary; Friars Juan Alonso PAGOADA ACOSTA and Grevin Oliver SIERRA RIVERA, Definitors.

Friar Jorge DOBLES ULLOA was born on August 19, 1966, in Costa Rica. He professed his solemn vows on January 24, 1992 and was ordained a priest on November 19, 1993.

The new Custody has different countries within its territory: Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. The Custody has friars from those same countries and also from Nicaragua. The official headquarters of the Custody is the La Asunción friary in Alajuela, Costa Rica. Currently, the new Custody has approximately thirty-three friars and seven friaries. Three of the friaries are in Costa Rica (Alajuela, Heredia [Belén] and San José) Two friaries are in in El Salvador (La Libertad and San Salvador) and the remaining two are in Honduras (Campamento and Comayagüela).

The work of the Chapter concluded on Thursday, December 14, with a moving ceremony, during which the Minister General delivered a copy of the Rule of the Order to each friar and blessed them afterwards.

On Friday, December 15, a large number of friars remained in Alajuela to attend the diacnal ordination of two members of the new Custody: Friars Pablo CARVAJAL ESPINOZA and Antonio SANDOVAL POVEDA. Bishop Enrique MONTERO presided.



The Definitors



The Capitulars

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Friar Ryszard Adam WRÓBEL
General Delegate for Communications



PERSONAL STATISTICS

Professiones perpetuae

Prov. Polonicae S. Antonii

KOWALCZE Marek, KURZYNA Sylwester, WOJTOWICZ Mateusz (04.10.2017)

Cust. gen. Assisiensis

HEBESTREIT Frank (07.10.2017)

Prov. Polonicae B.M.V. Imm.

RASILEWICZ [RASILEVICH] Paweł (07.10.2017)

Prov. Americanae S. Ioseph a Cup.

GIA HOANG Joseph Martin (02.08.2017)

Prov. Siculae

TERRANOVA Rosario, VOLANTE Massimiliano

Benedetto M. (22.10.2017)

Ordinationes diaconales

Prov. Romaniae

GAL Cristinel (04.10.2017)

Prov. Italicae S. Antonii

BIASIOTTO Antonio Francesco, BOTTARO Andrea (28.10.2017)

Cust. prov. Americae Centr.

CARVAJAL ESPINOZA Pablo Alonso, SANDOVAL POVEDA

Antonio (15.12.2017)

Prov. Brasiliensis S. Max. Kolbe

CRUZ Décio Sousa da, JÚNIOR Adailton Borges Gomes (16.12.2017)

Prov. Indiae

MULLAPPALLY Bijin Thomas, PATHADAN Lijomon, PUTHENVEETIL

Justin. THAZHATHHEL Akhil, VENKUZHIYIL Shinto (16.12.2017)

Prov. Coreae

GO Macario (21.12.2017)

Ordinationes sacerdotales

Prov. Italicae S. Francisci

MELE Andrea M. Giovanni (28.10.2017)

Prov. Brasiliensis S. Max. Kolbe

ANDRADE Mayko Ataliba Cruz de, ARAUJO Ennis Claudio da Silva, FILHO João Rogério

Lima de Carvalho, MENDONÇA Henrique de Sousa, SANTOS Herton Alcântara dos,

SILVA SOBRINHO Israel Fernando da (09.12.2017)

Prov. Coreae

GWON Peter, KIM John Baptist

(21.12.2017)

Prov. Apulae

MANCA Vito Cosimo (27.12.2017)

RESTING IN GOD

DEFUNCTI [NOMEN]	CIRCUMSCRIPTIO	DIES	LOCUS	AETAS
KYĆ Piotr	Prov. Pol. Cracovia	2017-10-04	Kraków-POLSKA	86
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