

L-AĦBAR



PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA TA' SAN PAWL APPOSTLU, MALTA.

No. 100 1.3.2005



F1-ewwel sena tal-website tal-provinċja, eluf iżuruha.

IS-SENA TA' L-EWKARISTIJA



100 ĦARĠA TA' L-AĦBAR

VIII CENTENARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

THE GRACE OF OUR ORIGINS

To the Friars Minor,
the Poor Clare Sisters,
the other Contemplative Franciscan Sisters
and all those whom this letter reaches:
“greetings and holy peace in the Lord” (2LtCus 1).

The grace of our origins

We Friars Minor, about to fulfil 800 years since the foundation of our Order through the approval of the *Rule of Life* by Innocent III, are preparing to celebrate “*The Grace of Our Origins*”.

According to historians, 1209 was the year in which Francis received approval of his “life project”, immediately called the “Proto-Rule”, from “the Lord Pope”. He himself recounts to us in his *Testament*: “And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel. And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me” (*Test* 14-15).

This early “form of life” continued to broaden out according to the needs of the Fraternity and was the basis of the *Rule* of 1221 and, later, of the *Rule* of 1223, confirmed by Honorius III; the texts of these, after many years, continue to be essential reference points for understanding Francis and ourselves..

Let us launch out

The celebration of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of our Fraternity gives us an opportunity of grace to *remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to open up with confidence to the future* (cf. *NMI* 1b). This is the way to celebrate the *Grace of Our Origins*. And so, at the beginning of this third millennium, we Franciscans wish to re-affirm our steadfast will to remain faithful to our charism by “living the Gospel in the Church according to the form observed and proposed by St. Francis” (*CCGG* 1, §1), re-creating it, however, in the light of the challenges of present-day Franciscan life.

We Friars Minor, joyfully accepting the invitation of the “lord Pope”, John Paul II, wish first of all, through the celebration of the 800 years since the foundation of our Order, to *open up in gratitude* to the “Most High, all-powerful, good Lord” (*Cant* 19), to the “Father of mercies” (*TestC* 2), for the “wonders” God has done through the Friars who preceded us, especially through Brother Francis, and for the “wonders” which the Lord, “Almighty God, Merciful Saviour” (*PrG* 6), continues to do in and through the Friars and Sisters who walk determinedly along the paths of virtue (cf. *LtErm* 3). However, because we do not wish to, or cannot, “be satisfied with praising the works of our predecessors”, since it would be “a great shame for us that the saints have accomplished great things and we want only to receive glory and honour by recounting them” (*Adm* 6), we should sincerely desire “to be inspired by them in order to carry out the part that corresponds to us in our own historical period” (*LgP* 3) and “recognise the urgency of returning to the essentials of our experience of faith and of our Franciscan spirituality in order to nourish, from within, our fragmented and unequal world, which is hungry for meaning,

with the liberating offer of the Gospel, just as Francis and Clare of Assisi did in their time” (*LgP 2*).

During the celebration of this great Franciscan jubilee, in contemplating the history of our Order, we Friars Minor joyfully recognise that we have “a glorious history to remember and to recount”, but, convinced as we are of the power and the currency of our “form of life” since it is essentially a form of gospel life inspired in Francis by the Almighty, we take up the challenge to continue to construct a great history with determination. To do this we sincerely wish to turn our eyes to the future, towards what we feel the Spirit is moving us in order to continue doing great things through us (cf. *VC 110*). In this way we wish to live *the grace of our origins* “not only as a *remembrance of the past*, but also as a *prophecy of the future*” (*NMI 3*).

Called as we have been to “to follow more closely the Gospel and the footprints of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (*CCGG 5, §2*), we wish to live this jubilee with an *attitude of conversion*. We therefore wish to make a memorial of our “resolution” (cf. *2LtA 11*), so that, “with swift pace and light step” (*2LtA 12*), we can, even in the midst of inevitable frailties, “walk more securely in the way of the commands of the Lord” (*2LtA 15*). Therefore, when we are preparing ourselves with joy and renewed optimism to celebrate *the grace of our origins*, we should be very strongly aware of the call “not to domesticate the prophetic words of the Gospel in order to adapt them to a comfortable style of life” (*LgP 2*) and feel the “urgency to be born again” (*LgP 2*).

Called to explore “new ways to apply the Gospel in history” (*VC 84*), we wish to live this jubilee with an *attitude of discernment* in order not to become installed or to repeat ourselves, but rather to be beacons generating hope in the dark night which our wounded and often crucified world is going through. We should, therefore, dispose ourselves to listen to the voice of the Lord in the events of history and to discover His presence in our midst, convinced that in this way we will strengthen our steps along the path towards the future and our adherence to the Gospel (cf. *NMI 6*). Reading the signs of the times and interpreting them properly will permit us to be “readable signs of life for a world that is thirsty for “new heavens and new earth” (*Is 65, 17; Ap 21, 1*)” (*LgP 7*).

Called anew “to propose courageously the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of” St. Francis and “to develop a dynamic fidelity in response to the signs of the times emerging in today’s world” (*VC 37*), we wish to *return to the essentials* of our “form of life” by re-reading it and re-incarnating it in the cultural reality of today; we wish to be faithful to our charism and, at the same time, to take into account the demands of the present moment and to anticipate the future.

What must we do, Brothers?

Dear Brothers, when we are preparing to celebrate *the grace of our origins*, it is necessary to ask ourselves: “What must we do, Brothers?” (*Acts 2, 37*). I must confess that this is a question I often ask myself. Seeing the reality of the world-wide Fraternity, I feel that the Spirit is asking us to focus, concentrate and decentralise.

Focusing ourselves on what should be everything for us “The good, all good, highest good” (*PrG 4*). For that reason, “having the heart turned to the Lord” (*1Rule 22, 19*) must be the priority of priorities of every Friar Minor. To overcome “every impediment” and to leave aside “every worry and anxiety” in order to “serve, love, honour and adore the Lord God, with a clean heart and a pure mind (*1R 22, 26*), is the great challenge to every Friar Minor, to every follower of Jesus.

Concentrating on the essentials in order to avoid fragmentation and disper-

sion. It is important to concentrate on the *Priorities* which place us as a “fraternity in mission” which lives the essential values of our charism. The *Priorities* are not peripheral options, but the consequence and requirements of a radically gospel life as St. Francis proposed to us and which, as such, are not optional values but the pillars of our fidelity to the Gospel. The *Priorities* are the key for reading them in order to live our identity as Friars Minor and to understand the expectations of the world.

Decentralising ourselves in order to go out to the world, our cloister, and, in it, to give witness and to proclaim that God alone is almighty (*LtO* 9), aware that we are not called to live for ourselves, but for others, that our fraternities are not for themselves, but to make the Kingdom of God known. Having clarified our belonging to the Lord –focusing- and our identity as Friars Minor –concentrating-, it is then time to go out to the whole world to proclaim the Gospel to all creatures so that all may know the grace and love that God the Father revealed and offered in Christ Jesus (cf. *CCGG* 83, §3). This is our mission and our reason for being: to make the Kingdom of God known (cf. *Priorities 2003-2009*, 4).

Focusing, concentrating, decentralising: three essential movements for a real *re-foundation* of our life and mission, the ultimate objective of this VIII Centenary. Focusing, concentrating, decentralising: three inseparable movements. Focusing, concentrating, decentralising: three movements which question our life and mission and call on us to return to the essentials of our charism, without forgetting the calls that come to us from history.

On the basis of this deep conviction, I ask all the Brothers to enter into this process, without haste to see results, for, as the proverb says, “no seed ever sees its own flower”, and also without delays which would have the unavoidable result of paralysing the process, if we want a future for our “forma vitae”, remembering what the Talmud says: “You are not obliged to complete your work, but you are not free not to begin it”. This is the responsibility of *all*, without exception; we have to take it on, with courage and creativity, feeling that we are “watchmen of the morning” (cf. *Is* 21, 11-12) and working to build a future full of hope with our eyes always turned to the Lord who continues to assure us: “Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (*Mt* 28, 20).

The project of “The Grace of Our Origins”

The project “*The grace of our origins*”, drawn up and approved by the General Definitory on the 8th of November 2004, and previously presented to the Presidents of the Conferences for a first approval and then enriched through suggestions which arrived from the different Entities of the Order, wishes to mark the journey of the entire Order of Friars Minor from 2006, the anniversary of the conversion of St. Francis, to 2009, the year in which we will remember the VIII Centenary of the approval of the “Proto-Rule”.

The project “*The grace of our origins*” wishes to help all the Friars to give a creative and suitable response to the challenges which come to us from the Church and the present-day world. I ask you all, especially the Ministers and Custodes, to accept it sympathetically and to put it into practice with faith and determination.

The project “*The grace of our origins*” provides a process in three stages: 2006, focused on discernment; 2007, focused on the project of life; and 2008-2009, focused on the celebration of the gift of vocation. Each stage will be presented later on through an aid of work and of deepening awareness. A very special moment will be the celebration of the extraordinary General Chapter, which we will celebrate, with the help of God, at St. Mary of the Angels, the Porziuncola (Assisi), from the 15th September to the 1st October 2006. We entrust this project of “*The Grace of Our Origins*” to St. Mary of

the Angels in order to have abundant fruits. May St. Francis, our father and brother, accompany us in this process.

Final request

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I, your humble servant, in profound communion with the General Definitory, request and wholeheartedly beseech you, in the charity which is God (cf. *1Jn* 4, 16) and with the desire to kiss your feet, to feel obliged to accept and put into practice these proposals, born in reflection and prayer, in order to be able to celebrate better *the grace of our origins* (cf. *2LTF* 87). “And may the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit bless all those men and women who receive them with kindness... Amen” (*2LTF* 88).

Rome, 8th December 2004,
*the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception,
Queen of the Order of Friars Minor.*

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, ofm
Minister General

The Project

The Order of Friars Minor is coming close to fulfilling 800 years since its foundation.

Everything began with the gospel conversion of St. Francis, placed under the sign of the gratuitous divine initiative:

“The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world” (Testament 1-4).

This happened at an undetermined time, but could be put at about twenty years before the writing of the Testament, perhaps in 1205. The power of an intuition which is born and developed, between lights and shadows, forward drives and backward steps, is already contained in every origin. There we can already read the whole grace of the future.

After the encounter with the leper, the Lord led Francis to San Damiano, where the Crucifix addressed him with the words “Francis, go rebuild My house; as you see, it is all being de-

stroyed” (*2Cel* 10). It was, however, at the Porziuncola that he understood his vocation better (cf. *1Cel* 22) and received the gift of brothers (cf. *Test* 14) with whom he set out on the first itinerant missions. The Poverello had the *forma vitae* written, “in few and simple words” “according to the Holy Gospel”, which the Most High Himself had revealed to him and which was then presented to the “Lord Pope”, who “confirmed” it (*Test* 14-15). “The fraternity, gathered around Brother Francis, obtained pontifical recognition of their proposal of life in 1209” (*Test* 14-15).

The celebration could become a *kairos* for the entire Fraternity of the Order and for the Franciscan Family, a real and proper moment of grace to encourage the “re-foundation” of the Order itself, in view of new initiatives, of a new life, in the sense of:

- a propitious occasion to return to the essentials of our human, Christian and Franciscan vocational experience, beginning again from our charismatic values:

- a providential time to nourish, by means of the liberating offer of the Gospel, “our divided, unequal and hungry-for-meaning world, as Francis and Clare of Assisi did in their time” (*LgP* 2) by promoting reconciliation, justice and peace;

- an “intense time” on the “path of

growth in the gospel life and in the discipleship of Jesus Christ” (cf. *OF* 38), in creative fidelity (*VC* 37).

Through the grace of the Incarnation we recognise history as a theological place the mystery of the time in which we celebrate the event of Christ the Saviour. Therefore, celebrating the origins of our Fraternity becomes an opportunity for our life to be liberated and converted. We are called to be *pilgrims and strangers in this world*, travelling companions of all men and women of good will, especially of the unimportant and poor, no matter which race, culture or religion they belong to. We celebrate then the origins of our *forma vitae* in ever fuller sharing with all and at this time of history, marked by radical changes and uncertainties for the future.

We could be tempted to turn in on ourselves. We are living in a period of transition and of great purification even for the Consecrated Life; a time therefore in which to exercise a humble and strong faith; a time in which we do not propose to find answers and to count the results of our efforts, while there is need to remain on the path of dialogue with each and everyone in the newness of life.

The path of preparation becomes, then, an itinerary during which we accept once again:

- the grace of our vocation as Friars Minor, lived in the “today” of history, in the discovery of the face of the leper and of Jesus Christ, the poor and crucified Lord;
- the audacious and creative decision to live today, personally and as brothers, the gospel life through discipleship of Jesus, contained in that “book of life and marrow of the Gospel”, which the Rule is, while so many signs seem to discourage us;
- the amazement and the thankfulness for the gift of the Franciscan vocation, so that we can restore to the world, to the Church and to our brothers through word and deed, professing it anew before the world and the Church and entrusting ourselves with all our

heart to our Fraternity.

Enriched by these motives, we do not run the risk of celebrating ourselves. We wish to live the enduring and provocative memory of our foundation, the grace of which we also gather in virtue of the life and mission of very many Friars Minor, who, from 1209 until today, accepted and put into effect, in creative fidelity, the “dream” of Francis of Assisi: to live the Gospel in the Church is possible.

We, after eight centuries, accept this dream so that, in the power of the Spirit, it can take on a new face today, animate our steps, tired at times, and leave an imprint for the future of our life of *contemplative Friars in mission*.

The Minister General and his Definitory, aware of their service of “giving witness through word and deed” to all the Friars of the actuality and power of the Gospel contained in our *forma vitae*, entrust to each Friar and to the local and provincial Fraternities the proposal of an itinerary that, in the diverse *places* of our life and mission, makes us walk ideally together to:

*undertake the path
of discernment necessary
to re-found our life and mission
on the essential elements
of our forma vitae.*

The very words of St. Francis point out the way to us:

“To all the Friars to whom I owe reverence and great love, to Brother... Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, his lord, and to the other Ministers General that will succeed him and to the ministers, custodes, humble priests of this same brotherhood in Christ and to all simple and obedient brothers, from the first to the last, Brother Francis, a worthless and weak man, your very little servant sends his greetings in Him, Who has redeemed and *washed us in His most precious blood*.

When **you hear** His name, adore Him [...] and *pay attention to my words*. *Incline the ear* of your heart and obey the voice of the Son of God.

son **He has sent you** into the whole world so that you may bear witness to His voice in word and deed and bring everyone to know that *there is no one who is all-powerful except Him*.

Persevere in discipline and holy obedience and, *with a good and firm purpose*, fulfil what you have promised Him. The Lord God offers Himself to us as *to His children*" (LtO 2-11).

With these sentiments, we propose to you some outlines for the preparation of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of the Order, in the context outlined especially by the Final Document of the 2003 General Chapter "*May the Lord give you peace*" and by the "*Priorities for the six-year period 2003-2009*".

We will begin in 2006 and culminate with the celebrations of 2009.

We are only proposing outlines so that, "wherever the Friars are", they can fulfil this journey within the language, culture, people and Churches in which they live and work recovering also the history of the origins of the Entity itself.

A Journey of Celebration

The journey is laid out in three stages. They propose to accompany us towards a favourable time through:

- listening, conversation and gospel discernment (the year 2006);
- putting into effect today, through holy works, the capacity to project our personal and fraternal life according to the Gospel (year 2007).
- the amazement and gratitude in celebrating the great gift of our vocation so that we can restore it through words and life (years 2008-2009).

For each stage there is proposed:

- a key word from St. Francis' journey of conversion;
- an objective to be reached;
- some means inspired by the Final Document of the General Chapter, "*May the Lord Give you Peace*", and by the aid for deep study of the "*Priorities 2003-2009. Followers of Christ for a fraternal world*", inviting the individual entities to create other significant means for the

local reality;

- gestures to be put before the People of God, to whom we owe a generous and faithful response to the grace of vocation and mission, which we received through the conversion and gospel life of Brother Francis and his companions and of many other Friars during the course of these eight centuries.

In the different stages of the proposed itinerary care should be taken to actively involve the members of the Franciscan Family, thanks to the common origin of vocation and mission.

The year 2006

Let us listen

in order to change our life!

"Lord, what do you wish me to do?"

Listening to, conversion to and discernment

of the will of the Lord for our present-day life

Where are we going?

- Towards the personal and shared-in-Fraternity recovery of "who" the Friar Minor is in his life and mission, accepting the call to re-read our identity at the beginning of the third millennium, faithful to man and to the Gospel lived in the Church in accordance with the intuitions of Francis.
- Towards a re-reading of our being a Fraternity-in-mission, according to the specifics of the Friars Minor, accepting the call to "go throughout the whole earth" (LtO 9), to announce "peace and penance to men" (1Cel 29) and to re-discover the face of the leper and of Jesus Christ, the poor and crucified Lord.

By what means?

- Cultivating the dimension of listening through the prayerful reading of the Word of God in accordance with Franciscan tradition, in the light of present-day men and women and attentive to the reading and interpretation of the signs of the times.

- Taking care of the proposal for and application of sabbatical periods, such as the “*Moratorium*”: every Friar should have the “courage to stop”. The Provinces and Conferences, therefore, should prepare a programme that would offer to each Friar the possibility to recover and re-affirm the grace of vocation, his relationship with God, with the Friars, with the world and his theological and professional up-dating.
- Finding, after the extraordinary General Chapter, the most suitable ways of convocing all the Friars in each Entity (e.g. Chapter of Mats) in order to discern apt methods of improving the life and mission of the Friars in the Entity itself.
- The Minister General with his Definitory, availing of the collaboration of the Secretariats and Offices in the Curia, should elaborate aids that would orient the discernment of “*who*” the Friar Minor is at this time and what his mission is.

Through the power of gestures:

- The presentation of the San Damiano Cross to each Friar;
- Concrete signs of sharing, minority, solidarity and of making restitution to “the lepers” of our time through a more sober and essential life.

The Year 2007

Let us dare to live the Gospel!

“This is what I want, this is what I seek, this is what I desire with all my heart! Overflowing with joy, he hastened to implement the words of salvation, and did not delay before he devoutly began to put into effect what he heard” (1Cel 22).

Renewing our personal and fraternity life according to the Gospel in the living context of our times.

Where are we going?

- Towards a courageous and creative decision to live today, personally and as brothers, the Gospel and the Rule “with

simplicity and without comment and to observe them with holy works until the end”; the gospel life through discipleship of Jesus, contained in the “book of life and marrow of the Gospel”, which the Rule is, while many signs seem to discourage us;

- Towards concrete and prophetic choices in view of the elaboration of the Provincial, local and personal Projects of Life and Mission in the light of the reading of the reality in which we live, of the Gospel, of the Rule, of the General Constitutions and Statutes and of the Priorities of the Order.

By what means?

- Encouraging Provincial and Local Chapters to complete concrete and prophetic choices that would liberate the Friars and the Entities from the different kinds of fear and from the various forms of appropriation in order to express a renewed faithfulness to the Gospel and Rule.

- Taking care of the elaboration and evaluation of the Provincial Life Project in each Entity, keeping in mind the Priorities, in order to arrive at “re-foundation”, in the sense of returning to the essentials and to the heart of our life and mission today.

- Taking care that each Local Fraternity works out and evaluates the Fraternal Life Project and that every Friar works out his Personal Life Project.

- *Re-assuming* ongoing formation as a priority choice in every Entity. What is specifically Franciscan should be cared for especially on both the experiential and theoretical levels so that the values of the Provincial Project of Life and Mission can be “personalised”.

Through the power of gestures:

- The consignment of the Holy Gospel, Rule and General Constitutions to every Friar.

A new community and public commitment oriented towards solidarity, new forms of evangelisation, a new availability for the *missio ad gentes*; concrete choices for justice, peace and the integ-

rity of creation; initiatives in favour of ecumenical, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue.

The years 2008-2009

Let us restore everything
to the Lord through
word and life!

”The Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.

And I had this written down simply and in few words and the Lord Pop confirmed it for me” (Test 14-15).

Amazement and gratitude in celebrating the gift of our vocation.

Where are we going?

- Towards the celebration of the gift of our vocation.
- Towards restitution of the gift received, through words and life, to the world, to the Church and to our brothers by professing again the Rule and life of the Friars Minor, entrusting ourselves with our whole heart to our Fraternity.

By what means?

- Taking care, in every Entity, of concrete forms of expropriation and the restitution of our goods to the poor, who are our masters and patrons.
- Assessing, in every local Fraternity, the use of our space in view also of choices for solidarity and sharing.
- Evaluating the use we make of the means for evangelisation so that they may be really in harmony with our state of minors (cf GGCC 109 §1).
- Consciously choosing, in every Entity, the priority of evangelisation that is most oriented in a missionary direction.
- Taking up the formula of religious Profession on the part of each Friar during the year so that it may become an occasion for the thankful memory of the gift of vocation, of a review of life and of renewed commitment

Through the power of gestures:

- A public celebration of an act of

thanksgiving to *the Father of mercies*, praising *the Most High and Good Lord* for the gift of the Christian and Franciscan vocation and to renew in each one the joy of *belonging to Him who is all our richness and sufficiency*.

- Renewal of the religious profession before the People of God: into the hands of the respective Ministers Provincial in the Entities and of the Lord Pope on the occasion of the General Chapter of 2009.

With our eyes on the future

Dear Brothers scattered throughout the world to live joyfully in a spirit of “penance”:

We send you this outline, trusting that it will be truly received as a favourable occasion to re-found the gospel life of our international Fraternity for the good of the world, in profound communion with the Church, by animating hope in the future, which the Spirit is preparing for us all at this difficult time in history.

We leave it to you all with the words of St. Clare, the faithful guardian of the grace of the origins. The memory of the origins of her vocation in her Testament spur us to enter into this living memorial of the charism that we, today, also continue to receive and for which we are responsible in the future:

“In the name of the Lord. Amen.

Among all the other gifts which we have received and continue to receive daily from our benefactor, the Father of mercies, and for which we must express the deepest thanks to our glorious God, our vocation is a great gift. Since it is the more perfect and greater, we should be so much more thankful to Him for it. For this reason the Apostle writes: Acknowledge your calling”

(Test 1-4).

Some activities in view of the Centenary

Chapters

- Extraordinary General Chapter: 15th September – 1st October 2006 at St. Mary of the Angels (Assisi).
- Chapter of Mats for the young solemnly professed Friars of the Order

(2007)

Congresses

- An International Congress on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (2006).
- An International Congress for the Moderators of Ongoing Formation (2007).
- An International Congress on history: "The Order of Friars Minor; Yesterday and Today".
- Continental Congresses on "Ad gentes" Evangelisation.

Publications

- A new publication of the Writings of St. Francis, (Esser edition).
- The publication of the Rule in the main languages spoken in the Order.
- The publication of the Constitutions of the Order from the beginning till today (Latin text).
- The publication of the Enchiridion of the Official Documents of the Order (from 1966 till now).
- An extraordinary number of the *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*.

The Minister and Definitory General
Prot. 095067

Abbreviations

Sacred Scripture

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Ap	Apocalypse
Jn	The Gospel according to John
Is	Isaiah
Mt	The Gospel according to Matthew

The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

1LtF	Letter to the Faithful (1 st Edition)
2LtCus	Second letter to the Custodes
2LtF	Letter to the Faithful (2 nd Edition)
Adm	Admonitions
Cant	Canticle of Creatures
LtO	Letter to the whole Order
PrG	Praises of the Most High God
Rnb	Regula non bullata (1 st Rule)
Test	Testament

The Writings of St. Clare of Assisi

2LtA	Second Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague
LtErm	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
TestC	Testament of Clare

Other abbreviations

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas of Celano.
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas of Celano.

GGCC	<i>General Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor, Rome 2004.</i>
LgP	The Lord give you Peace, Final Document of General Chapter 2003, Rome 2003.
NMI	John Paul II, <i>Novo millennio ineunte</i> , Apostolic Letter, 2001.
OF	<i>Ongoing Formation in the Order of Friars Minor, Rome 1995.</i>
VC	John Paul II, <i>Vita consecrata</i> , Apostolic Exhortation, 1996.

L-AHBAR

Holqa bejn l-ahwa
L-ewwel hargha - Dicembru 1990



100 Hargha



An Appeal from the Association of Franciscan Families of India, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry Region for the Victims of Tsunami

Association of the Franciscan Families of India – Regional unit of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry states

The Association of the Franciscan Families of India is a national level networking of all Franciscans of India. This has worked during the Gujarat Earth Quake in 2002. Ever since, these congregations have come together to undertake various activities like animation, social commitments and updating of Franciscan life style in Indian Context.

The Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry Region has around 4000 Priests, Brothers and sisters belonging to various Franciscan Congregations. There are also few thousands of Secular Franciscan Order – both men and women in these states. This team has an executive committee that sees to the necessary coordination for Formation, social activities and spiritual animation in these two states.

Special need to respond to the Tsunami victims

We have been challenged by the greatest tragedy in these states on 26th December, 2004 in the form of Tsunami that has killed more than 15 thousand people and the death rate is still on the increase. This may go upto 50 thousand. All these took place in few minutes. It has also rendered more than 60 thousand people without home, relations, belongings etc. They are totally dependant to the mercy, care and concern of others.

Since majority of the Tsunami victims

Ritratti:

1. Il-patrijiet iħafra ħofra f' Nagapattinam, Indja.
2. Patrijiet OFM f' MUTTOM Nagercoil



belong to the states of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, we, the members of TNP-AFFI have come together to take up this cause as one family and work together as Franciscans. However, already almost all the Franciscan congregations have entered directly into the villages and coastal areas to do the emergency relief measures.

Emergency Meeting of the TNP- AFFI

The delegates of TNP-AFFI have come together for an emergency meeting on Sunday, 2nd January, 2005 to review the present activities as well as to plan for the short term and long term mission for the Tsunami victims.

The Tsunami disaster victims in the states of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry in India are already above 40 thousand and still the number is not certain as many more dead bodies are being recovered. As Franciscans brothers and sisters of different Franciscan Orders and congregation we are already in the field, seeing to the immediate relief works. We, along with other people of goodwill are responding to the situation at various levels. But we feel unanimously that a Franciscan response should go much beyond this. Therefore a preparatory meeting consisting of the

delegates of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry Association of Franciscan Family of Indian (TNP-AFFI) came together at Nirmala Convent in Chennai on 2nd January 2005 to think aloud and chalk out a further program of action. Accordingly we have planned for an action plan on 11th January at the Capuchin Provincialate, Trichy.

The Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry Region has around 4000 Priests, Brothers and sisters belonging to various Franciscan Congregations

An ad-hoc committee of experts from Franciscan Families of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry (Lawyers, Professional social workers and social animators) from various fields was formed with 15 persons.

The measures already undertaken

The delegates reported

about their immediate relief works done by their respective congregations.

- Medical Aid, supply of basic provisions like food, clothing and utensils.
- Making a survey of the present situation
- Counselling to the depressed people
- Burying the dead
- Cleaning the area and creating a conducive living situation.
- Some congregations have already sent their members as well as those under formation to reside in the affected areas as well as to be with the people in agony.

The activities yet to be done

1. Need to plan a long term service and ministry among the affected people
2. Sending personnel and experts in medical and social field for relief works
3. Developmental activities for their future – Employment, education, adoption of the orphan boys and girls
4. Housing and infrastructure
5. Sanitation and medical assistance
6. Taking care of the widows and the elders
7. Education of the children
8. employment opportunities for fishermen - fishing boats, nets and

other means of livelihood
 9. Employment opportunities for women for their sustenance
 10. Counselling for the mentally depressed due to tsunami

Tapping local resources

In view of immediate assistance, the TNP-AFFI has sent letters through the letter of the AFFI President, to all the Franciscan families to contribute in cash and kind for the victims. The financial assistance they provide will be spent for the relief works.

Request for help to the Tsunami Victims

In view of executing the above plan of action, the Franciscan Families of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry have come together to undertake the relief and rehabilitation work in these two states. Even though as a first step the congregations have undertaken emergency measures, there is a great need to concentrate on long term rehabilitation and reconstruction works in the states.

Hence we would like to approach you for financial assistance of whatever amount needed for long term undertaking. Please send us whatever amount possible at the earliest for immediate relief works. However, we would be happy to get your helps for our rehabilitation and

reconstruction. This could be sent even by instalment. Regarding this we will be able to send you a detailed project in a few days time. Until then we would like you to reserve your possible financial assistance to support our long-term Inter-Franciscan Family projects in favour of the Tsunami victims.

We solicit a matching response from you to the sudden and devastating Tsunami that robbed the life and joy of people living in the cost lands and shattered the joy and peace of each one of us.

The amounts that you contribute will be created as a fund for the relief and rehabilitation of victims of Natural Calamity (Tsunami). By the Association of the Franciscan families in India (AFFI.)

The amount that you contribute will be allocated By AFFI – For emergency help and relief for the victims of Tsunami in India and for the efforts to link up relief work with rehabilitation and follow up. The fund will be utilized for the following purposes.

- Purchase of medicines, food, cloths, and kitchen utensils, Tarpaulins, blankets, tents, building and sanitation materials, equipments, Household articles and

such other materials.

- It may also be utilized for meeting the expenses of volunteers towards traveling and training focused on accompanying the traumatized victims, like Counseling, group therapy, team building, Crisis/ Disaster Management, etc as well as for boarding and lodging, postage and telephone, and all expenses related with the work of relief and rehabilitation including payment of salaries to staff, workers, purchase of office equipment, tents, rent for premises, vehicles, etc.

- It may also be utilized for purchase of education and study materials for children, for facilitating education (including Vocational education) of children, youth, women, adult literacy programs; social-economic programs, life coping skills, self-employment programs, micro-credit, income-generation programs, purchase of fishing boats and nets and any other purpose which will benefit the victims of this calamity.

It may also be utilized for any other expenses directly or indirectly connected with the relief and rehabilitation work that will benefit the victims of Natural calamities.



- Like Documentation, liaison agents for getting, grants, procuring lost records

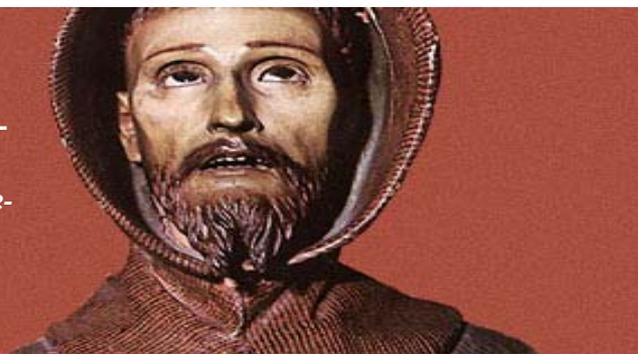
and certificates and documents from concerned offices to the concerned victims like Ration card, Election I.D. Birth /Death certificates documents on properties and assets, banks and insurances etc. with the objective of enabling an Independent Existence for these unfortunate

brothers and sisters of ours. With love and prayers and thanking you in advance for your kindness and generosity,

I remain your brother in Francis

Fr. Divakar OFM. Cap
Minister Provincial

The celebration of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of our Fraternity gives us an opportunity of grace to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to open up with confidence to the future.



Spirtu u Hajja

The quarterly “Spirtu u Hajja” (Spirit and Life) was founded in 1986, with the aim of being a medium of Franciscan Culture. It is principally directed to the Franciscan religious, male and female, and the Secular Franciscans of Malta, but its articles have a wide range of interests. Its aim is that of presenting the Franciscan charism not o-nly as a spiritual event, but also as a cultural contribution to contemporary society.

Franciscan Studies have made tremendous strides in the past century, ever since the publication of Paul Sabatier’s Life of Saint Francis in 1893. Francis of Assisi and his Order are now widely respected as o-ne of the great movements of ecclesiastical and social reform of the Middle Ages.

The Franciscans have been at the forefront in the universities, in expeditions to China and the New World, in the banking system and social justice issues, in popular art and piety. “Spirtu u Hajja” has the aim of giving this message in order to appreciate the perennial value of the Franciscan charism even in our contemporary culture, in which the issues of justice, peace, and integrity of creation have come to the forefront.



EDIZZJONI
TAU



75th ANNIVERSARY

Maltese-Canadian ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE Parish

The peace of the Lord be with you all! The Franciscan Charisma was a consequence of the current circumstances. St. Francis, on seeing how the presence of God meant nothing for much of the people of his time, proposed a new way of Christian life, by simply living according to the Gospel of the Lord. The Franciscan is always ready to adapt himself according to the signs of the time.

That's the reason, why the Maltese Franciscans Friars, in view of the Emigration reality during the last century, were among of the foremost to feel the need to offer their service in regard to the Maltese Communities which were forming up in different countries. Within a few years, the Maltese Franciscans were present in Egypt, Libya, England, America, Canada and Australia.

The whole complex of the St. Paul the Apostle Parish, on Dundas Street, in Toronto, is an example how the Franciscan Friars, looking after both the spiritual and social needs of the Maltese Emigrants. St. Paul the Apostle Parish, is the result of many years of cooperation and friendship between the Friars and the Maltese Emigrants. We can say, that the reality of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, gave birth to many other spiritual and social groups among the Maltese Emigrants spread out in different parts of Canada.

During the last few years, when it was a problem for us as Franciscan Friars to continue our presence in Canada, keeping in mind all the cooperation and friendship of so many fruitful and happy years, we didn't want just to leave, but with great effort and determination we passed the leadership to the Maltese Missionary Society of St. Paul, certain that under their leadership the Maltese-Canadian Community would continue to prosper.

With all our hearts, we join you in your thanksgiving to God for all the accomplishment of the past 75 years through the St. Paul the Apostle Parish Church. We thank you for all your cooperation in the hard work. We promise you our prayers for you to continuing to be light of God in Canada, through the intercession of our Father in faith, St. Paul the Apostle.

I bless you with the words of St. Francis *“May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He turn his face to you and have mercy on you. May he look upon and give peace. May the Lord bless you, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit..”*

Ritratt isfel: Il-Ministru Provincjal jiccelebra l-Ewkaristija meta l-Provinċja temmet l-impenn taghha fil-parroċċa. Jidhru wkoll Fra Albert u Fra Jimmy.

Fr. Paul Galea OFM
Minister Provincial





THE FRANCISCANS IN MANCHESTER (1951-1953)

When the war was over, an increasing number of Maltese emigrants began to flow into Britain and soon the ecclesiastical authorities, both in Malta and in Britain, realized the growing need for the spiritual welfare of the emigrants. As Fr. Dominic Coppola OFM became involved in this movement he was asked to act as chaplain to a number of Maltese girls working in the Lancashire mills. He was greatly encouraged in this activity by Mr. John Axisa, then Director of Emigration.

Among his various activities in Manchester he used to organise a monthly Mass followed by a get together for the Maltese community.

THE FRANCISCANS IN LONDON (1953-1958)

After about two years in Manchester Fr. Dominic Coppola left to London at the request of Mr. Salomone, then Maltese High Commissioner in London. Consequently he was appointed chaplain to the Maltese community. From 1953 to 1958 he had to live wherever he found a welcoming shelter at different presbyteries and friaries, working in the hope that one day he would be given a house as promised by the late Cardinal Griffin. The prolonged illness and subsequent death of His Eminence once more dashed his hopes and he was almost on the point of giving up this apostolate.

THE FRANCISCANS IN PIMLICO (1958-1963)

Archbishop (late Cardinal) Godfrey, who succeeded Cardinal Griffin, later donated to Fr. Dominic Coppola a small house at 110, Lillington Street, Pimlico, which he promptly named The Maltese

Catholic Centre. This house inspired him for greater things to come. For about five years this house served as a centre for the organisation of all the spiritual activities and most of the social functions among the Maltese and served as a home to many seeking help, advice and comfort.

The first to join Fr. Coppola in this apostolate was Fr. Augustine Portelli OFM, followed by Fr. Hugh Attard OFM. It was indeed a memorable occasion when Cardinal Godfrey came to bless the house in 1958. The Centre also welcomed the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr. Micheal Gonzi, when he visited London in 1959. On that occasion he blessed a car donated to the Franciscan Friars by the people of Malta.

In its humble way the small house in Pimlico was a great beginning and I shall always keep a place in my heart for it.

The calendar of spiritual and social activities as time went by - but there where three outstanding events of the year-the Lenten missions in Maltese at various parishes in London as well as in Manchester and Chatham, the Malta Day celebrations in September and the various functions at Christmas time, especially the party for Maltese Children. Pilgrimages for Maltese immigrants were also organised to various places in England and abroad.

THE FRANCISCANS IN POPLAR (1963-1968)

As activities increased, the house at Pimlico became too small and inadequate. Happily at the time a social club belonging to the North Thames Gas Board in Poplar was up for sale but the asking price, although reasonable, was far beyond their resources. Cardinal Godfrey, however, very generously

stepped in to acquire the block of building for the new Malta Catholic Centre.

As the building required urgent repairs they turned once again to the financial secretary of the Archdiocese of Westminster, Rev. Conon Rivers, who not only graciously donated the money required but also guided and encouraged us.

The new centre was officially opened on June 23, 1963 by the late Bishop Craven after a solemn High Mass celebrated by the late Fr. Accursio Scerri, OFM, at the time Provincial of the Franciscan Friars in Malta.

As a permanent reminder of Cardinal Godfrey's generosity we named the hall after him while our church was dedicated to St. Paul and St. Francis. This church was known as the national church of the Maltese in London.

THE FRANCISCANS IN VICTORIA (1968-1993)

Unlike, the house in Pimlico, the one in Poplar was quite large and as it involved a lot of expenses to maintain it was becoming a financial burden on us. Luckily we found a house in Victoria which was suitable to our needs. Mgr. Philip Calleja, director of the Emigrants Commission, kindly loaned us the capital required to purchase the premises. The capital was eventually reimbursed in due course by the Franciscan Friars.

The Centre continued to be used as a hostel for the Maltese and also for social functions. The hostel served also as temporary accommodation for Maltese emigrants until they found a permanent home. It also accommodated patients from Malta who needed medical treatment in London sent and sponsored by the Maltese Government.

A children's nursery was also available for the children of all denominations. This nursery was run by the Franciscan Sisters, who also helped in the running of the Centre. In 1960 Fr. Coppola succeeded in obtaining a house

where the Franciscan Sisters transformed into a hostel. They accommodate the Maltese patients, their relatives and tourists.

THE FRANCISCANS IN PIMLICO (1993-

In 1993, we have moved from 22, St. George's Drive to 1, Balniel Gate, Pimlico, London.

Our primary ministry outside the friary is to the patients that the Maltese Government regularly sends to receive specialized treatment. We cater for the spiritual and social needs of patients and their relatives or friends who may be with them during their treatment. As part of the social care, we act as interpreters with medical staff when the need arises for patients and relatives who do not speak English.

We are also deeply committed to ministry with our spiritual sisters in the tradition of Francis and Clare of Assisi, formally known as The Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus. We are also available to the various communities of Maltese religious women who have a presence in the London area. We continue to gather the Maltese for regular liturgies once a month in Brixton. After the mass we meet in the parish hall. We have three main celebrations: Christmas, St. Paul Shipwreck in Malta and St. Peter and St. Paul Apostles (Imnarja).

FRIARS WORKING AT THE MALTESE MISSION

Fr. Stephen Sciberras ofm
Local Superior
Chaplain of the Maltese Mission

Fr. Charles Diacono ofm
Assistant Superior
Assistant Chaplain of the
Maltese Mission

maltesemissionuk@yahoo.com

MISSION STATEMENT

"In the name of the Lord begins the life of the Friars Minor. The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity. And this is my advice, my counsel, and my earnest plea to my friars in our Lord Jesus Christ that, when they travel about the world, they should not be quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words (cf. 2 Tim. 2:14) or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them. The friars to whom God has given the grace of working should work in a spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which ever temporal consideration must be subordinate. Wherever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family. And they should have no hesitation in making known their needs to one another. For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly."

Our first mission is witnessing to our fraternity in the spirit of our rule of life. As fragile humans we continue to listen in such a way as to discern the call of Christ to follow him in the simple way of Gospel discipleship. This is the source of our presence here in London. Our first ministry is to welcome each other as brothers in Christ.

We reach out to those around us in the spirit of an unbroken presence in England for over forty years. This presence has been transformed throughout our history here of friars on their own or in friaries in Manchester, Cardiff and in London: Poplar Lane, Victoria and now Pimlico. The Maltese Friars have sought to reach out to the Maltese community resident in and visiting London.

At present our primary ministry outside the friary is to the patients being sent by the Maltese government to London area hospitals for specialized treatment. We are also deeply committed to ministry with our spiritual sisters in the tradition of Francis and Clare of Assisi, formally known as The Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus. They live in Victoria and through their hostel they offer shelter and comfort to these Maltese patients and their families during their hospital treatments in London.

We continue to gather the Maltese for regular liturgies once a month at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Brixton and are available to them as the need arises and our circumstances permit. We are also available to the various communities of Maltese religious women who have a presence in the London area.

We deal with the patients themselves but we also deal with their families. For many families the experience of serious sickness is new. Beyond the language difficulties there are many other hardships the family endures including loneliness and isolation, dietary difficulties, financial difficulties, marital difficulties. It is all very well to say that sickness brings families together but many times it seems to make things even more difficult: nerves are frayed, exhaustion becomes overpowering, boredom, poor diets, past issues, disturbed sleep patterns are just a few of the factors which come into play

When they talk about what has touched them about the friars who have visited them they mention many things: a smile, a soft word of encouragement, someone with whom to share a joke, a reminder of Maltese traditions or foods, a silent presence of solidarity, a warm touch on the shoulder, a shoulder to cry on, a tear shared: all of these things seem relatively small but can mean so much.

Although our co-operation with Malta House puts us in contact with Maltese people coming from Malta to London for medical care, we do visit other Maltese who have come here for privately funded treatments or are living in London and are in hospital for different treatments or at home convalescing. Some of their problems are different but the Maltese Language, Culture, Faith and Identity are all important factors prompting the sick themselves, or their families, to ask for our visits.

Fra Stephen Sciberras jikteb dwar il-hidma pastorali

Id-dar zghira taghna f'Pimlico tinsab fil-limiti tac-centru ta' Londra. Li d-dar taghna tinsab fic-centru hu ta' vantagg ghax hafna mill-isptarijiet li ahna mmorru fihom jinsabu fic-centru. F'din il-missjoni dejjem hadmu zewgt patrijiet. Attwalment jahdmu fid-dar ta' Londra hemm Stephen Sciberras ofm bhala gwardjan u kappillan u Charles Diacono ofm bhala vigarju u vici kappillan. Ghalkemm ic-centru ta' Londra hu storbjuz bhal ma hi kull belt kbira ohra, in-naha taghna hi kwieta hafna. Infatti kull minn jigi ghandna jghidilna li d-dar taghna qisha monasteru minhabba s-silenzju. Dan ghalina hu ta' vantagg ghax wara gurnata ta' hidma fl-istorbju tal-belt u fl-ambjent gieli anke dipressiv tal-isptarijiet, il-kwiet tad-dar jghinek tistrieħ u tirrilassa għall-gurnata li jkun imiss.

MALTESE MISSION F'LONDRA

Il-ministeru primarju taghna f'Londra huwa mal-pazjenti li jintbghatu regolarment mill-gvern ta' Malta ghal kura speċjalizzata fl-isptarijiet ta' Londra u ghal dawk li jitolghu magħhom għas-support. Ahna mmorru fl-isptarijiet biex inzuru lill-pazjent u lil dawk li jitolghu mieghu u nagħtuhom is-sapport spiritwali u soċjali li jkollhom bzonn.

Meta kont marid gejtu zzuruni...

Dawn huma l-kliem ta' Gesu' li ahna ghandna l-opportunita' li nghixu fil-missjoni taghna gewwa Londra. Il-prezenza taghna tigi apprezza hafna mill-pazjent li ahna mmorru nzuru. Anke meta sempliciment il-pazjent (speċjalment dawk li jkunu wehidhom u jdumu fit-tul) jismaghna nitkellmu mieghu bil-Malti ihossu xi ftit home. Il-pazjent hafna drabi jiftah qalbu magħna u jaqsam is-sofferenza mhux biss fizika imma anke spiritwali u soċjali magħna u ahna nagħmlu mill-ahjar li nistghu biex nagħtu is-sapport li jkollu bzonn. Ahna nikkonfortawhom ukoll permezz tas-sagramenti: qrar, tqarbin u grizma tal-morda. Bhala parti mill-hidma soċjali mal-pazjenti ahna nagħmluha ta' interpreti ma' l-istaff mediku meta jkollna pazjenti li ma jkunux jitekellmu u jifhmu bil-lingwa ingliza.

u tircievu għal mitt darb' aktar...

U dan hu tassew minnu ghax din l-esperjenza mal-marid hija wahda li tarrik-kik hafna. Hija esperjenza li fiha tircievi hafna aktar milli inti tipprowa taghti!

Ahna wkoll niehdu hsieb il-bzonnijiet spiritwali tas-sorijiet Frangiskani tal-Qalb ta' Gesu'. Huma joqghodu gewwa Victoria u jagħtu allogg lill-pazjenti u dawk li jigu magħhom go l-hostel tagħhom. Ahna nagħmlu zewgt quddisiet fil-kappella tas-sorijiet kuljum. Wahda fis-7.00 ta' filghodu għall-komunita' tas-sorijiet li hi miftuha wkoll għan-nies. Il-quddiesa l-ohra ssir fis-

6.00 ta' filghaxija apposta għall-pazjenti u għal dawk li jigu magħhom li jkunu qieghdin fil-hostel tas-sorijiet. Matul is-sena nagħmlu wkoll celebrazzjoni tal-fejqa għall-morda.

Ahna l-patrijiet bi qbil u flimkien mas-sorijiet għamilna xi facilitajiet zghar fil-kmamar tal-pazjenti. S'issa xtra-jna electric kettle u fridge għal kull kamra, fil-kamra tal-ikel tal-pazjenti gibna microwave u television u video fil-kamra tat-television.

Nagħmlu wkoll quddiesa darba fix-xahar għall-Maltin fi Brixton. Wara nil-taqghu flimkien biex nghidu xi kelma u nix-orbu kakra te'. Niccelebraw tliet festi: il-festi tan-nawfragju ta' San Pawl fil-gzejjer Maltin, l-Imnarja u l-Milied. Matul is-sena jkollna International Mass f'Westminster Cathedral fid-djocesi ta' Westminster u ohra f' St. Goerge's cathedral fid-djocesi ta' South-wark. F'dawn iz-zewgt celebrazzjonijiet nil-taqghu l-kappillaniji etnici kollha tad-djocesi u flimkien nagħmlu quddiesa internazzjonali b'lingwi, kant, zfin, lbies u uzanzi minn pajjizi differenti.



On the 2nd February Fr. Richard Stanley Grech ofm was appointed as the new Rector of the Pastoral Centre Gesu l-Habib in Sliema. He will be responsible for the celebration of daily Mass and of the pastoral care of those who come to this centre. Fr. Richard will be replacing Fr. Bernard Bartolo OFM who died on the 8th January.

PASTORAL CENTRE ĠESU L-HABIB

The Pastoral Centre GESU' L-HABIB is situated in Fr. Marjanu Vella ofm Street, Sliema. The premises comprises a small Chapel on ground level, with a sacristy at the back and a confessional box on the right hand side as one enters the chapel. There is also a small balcony above the main door of the chapel. The chapel can hold a congregation of about eighty people. Mass is celebrated daily all the year round, at 6.00pm on weekdays, and at 7.00am and 8.00am on Sundays and Public Holidays. All the various liturgies associated with the liturgical year are held. Most of the people frequenting the Chapel are senior citizens from the neighbouring residences.

Above the Chapel there are two levels, the first comprising a medium sized hall with adjoining office, as small corner kitchen sink and dressers, and toilet facilities. The second level is a wide open room leading to the roof. Both levels are furnished and can be used for catechism classes and/or social activities, or other, that can cater to medium sized groups of people.

Every first Friday of the month a Eucharistic Adoration is held immediately after Mass. on the second Friday of the month as bible study is held after Mass, while on the fourth Friday of the Month, silent Adoration is held between 8.00pm and 9.00pm. once a month, on the third Thursday of the month a morning retreat is held, with Mass celebrated at 9.00am and after a short break, a talk at 10.00am. Catechism classes are held twice a week on Mondays and Thursday from 4.30pm to 5.00pm. While a group of ladies hold Bingo sessions every Wednesday evening.

There is a number of people who help with the celebration of the liturgy, like readers and lay ministers of the Eucharist, and with the cleaning of the premises.



This is a record of the development of the Pastoral centre "Gesu' l-Habib" in Sliema as gathered by Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm, previous director.

Fr. Richard s. Grech OFM

1950

The first House for the instruction of Christian Doctrine was opened at 2, Camenzuli Street, Sliema.

1951

The House for the instruction of

Christian Doctrine was moved to 12/13, Rosa Street, Sliema.

1957

During December Fr. Marjanu Vella ofm was chosen as the first rector of the chapel.

1974

The chapel changed parish from that of Sacro Cuor, run by the Maltese Franciscans, to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Balluta, run by the Carmelites.

1988

25th February – Fr. Marjanu Vella ofm passed away.

30th April – Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm took over as new rector of the chapel.

September – the Thursday collection, during evening Mass held at the chapel, in aid of persons and/or organisations was initiated.

1992

31st July - A premises was bought for the sum of Lm6,000.

1993

8th March – The old chapel was pulled down (Fr. Bernard went to Canada) During March Mass was celebrated at 2, Camenzuli Street.

24th March – construction work for the new chapel was started.

18th April – the blessing and laying down of the foundation stone (Fr. Bernard back from Canada)

15th July – A Stop Notice was issued.

4th October – Construction work at the chapel resumed.

24th November – Construction in shell form was completed.

21st December – Celebration of the first Mass in the Chapel.

1994

8th January – Official opening of the Chapel.

1995

11th November – Sa Melit passed away.

1996

8th June – Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm was elected Minister Provincial and gave up his post as rector at the Chapel.

1st July – Fr. John Muscat ofm was

appointed new rector of the Chapel. He remained until December.

1997

Januray – Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm served as supply priest until the appointment of a new rector.

February – Fr. Albert Micallef ofm was appointed new rector.

3rd October – Pawlina Scicluna passed away

1998

During this year Fr. Adrian Cachia ofm was supply priest at the Chapel.

November – Fr. Albert Micallef ofm was appointed Guardian at Palermo.

17th November – Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm was again appointed as rector.

2001

September – the free distribution of the newspaper GENS was started – the first time only 9 copies.

12th October – the Thursday Collection Charity Fund was founded amounting to Lm5,000.

2004

8th January – the Pastoral Centre GESU' L-HABIB celebrated it 10th Anniversary.

2005

8th January – Fr. Bernard Bartolo ofm passed away quite unexpectedly.

2nd February – Fr. Richard Stanley Grech ofm was appointed new rector.

7th February – Fr. Richard ofm commenced his new pastoral duties by celebrating his first Mass at the Chapel.



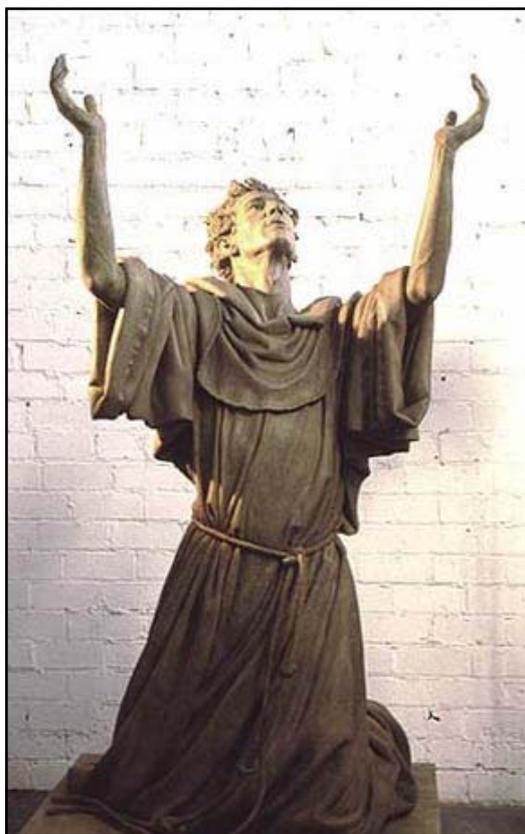
Where are we going?

- Towards the celebration of the gift of our vocation.
- Towards restitution of the gift received, through words and life, to the world, to the Church and to our brothers by professing again the Rule and life of the Friars Minor, entrusting ourselves with our whole heart to our Fraternity.

Fil-kuntest tas-Sena iddedikata għall-Ewkaristija, fuq xewqa tal-Ministru Provinċjal u bl-inizjattiva ta' Fr. Noel Muscat, thejja sussidju dwar it-tema ta' l-Ewkaristija fil-kitbiet u fil-ħajja ta' San Franġisk. Dan is-sussidju qiegħed jidher bl-Ingliż u bit-taljan fuq il-web-page tal-Provinċja.

SAN FRANĠISK U L-EWKARISTIJA

Il-preżenza tal-Franġiskani fl-Art Imqaddsa, li bdiet miċ-Ċenaklu, il-post qaddis tat-twaqqif ta' l-Ewkaristija, turi l-importanza li, matul din is-sena, aħna nieqfu nirriflettu fuq iċ-ċentralità ta' l-Ewkaristija fil-ħajja tagħna. Dan nistgħu naghmluh, qabel xejn, b'riflessjoni fuq it-testi Bibliċi li jitkellmu dwar l-Ewkaristija, u billi naqraw id-dokumenti tal-Knisja li riċentement jitrattaw it-tema ta' l-Ewkaristija, bħalma huma l-Enċiklika «Ecclesia de Eucharistia» u l-Ittra Apostolika «Mane nobiscum Domine» tal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II.



Bħala approfondiment fl-ispiritwalità Franġiskana nistgħu nirriflettu fuq il-kitbiet «ewkaristiċi» ta' San Franġisk, bħalma huma l-I Twissija, l-Ittri lill-Kjeriċi, lill-Kustodji, lill-Insara u lill-Ordni, u t-Testment. Fihom San Franġisk jitkellem dwar l-Ewkaristija fil-kuntest tal-misteru ta' l-Inkarnazzjoni, u jara rabta intima bejn il-ġisem veru ta' Kristu li tnissel fil-ġuf ta' Marija u l-ġisem veru ta' Kristu fl-idejn tas-saċerdot waqt is-sagrifiċċju Ewkaristiku. Bħala riżultat ta' dan San Franġisk jitkellem dwar il-ħeġġa li l-aħwa għandhom juru lejn l-indafa tal-knejjes u ta' l-altari, lejn il-qima li għandu jkollhom lejn is-saċerdoti minħabba l-ministeru tagħhom, u lejn il-kliem miktuba tal-Mulej li bihom jiġu ikkonsagrati l-ispeċi Ewkaristiċi. Juri r-rabta li teżisti bejn il-Penitenza u l-Ewkaristija u l-ħeġġa li l-aħwa għandhom juru biex jirċievu ta' spiss il-Ġisem u d-Demm tal-Mulej.

Dan kollu rridu narawh fil-kuntest tal-ħajja ta' San Franġisk, li ta' spiss kien jiddefendi t-tagħlim kattoliku dwar l-Ewkaristija kontra l-ereżija tal-Katari, l-aktar waqt ir-riforma li nieda l-Konċilju Lateran IV (1215). Jiġu ikkummentati xi siltiet mill-bijografi medjevali, li juruna l-qima li kellu l-qaddis lejn l-Ewkaristija u s-saċerdozju ministerjali.

Fl-aħħarnett isiru riferimenti għall-Kostituzzjonijiet Ġenerali ta' l-Ordni tagħna, f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' l-Ewkaristija, u applikazzjoni tagħhom fil-kuntest tal-ħames Prijoritajiet ta' l-Ordni. Hekk it-tema ta' San Franġisk u l-Ewkaristija ma tibqax biss waħda informattiva, imma tghinna biex nirriflettu kif aħna wkoll nistgħu nikbru fil-ħeġġa li ngħixu s-sens awtentiku ta' l-Ewkaristija fl-impenn tagħna evangeliku u Franġiskan, fil-kuntest tal-Knisja u b'ubbidjenza mimlija mħabba lejn id-direttivi tagħha.

Qegħdin nipublikaw din l-intervista li għamel il-gurnal il-Lehen is-Sewwa (29.02.05) ma' Fra Ġoġ Aquilina, OFM, awtur tal-ktieb "Is-Sorijiet Ġerosolmitani, il-Knisja u l-Monasteru Sant' Orsla, Valletta". F'dan il-ktieb l-awtur jirrakonta l-ġrajja ta' dan il-monasteru u l-ħajja klwastrali tas-sorijiet matul dawn l-aħħar 420 sena.

Il-ġrajja stupenda tal-Monasteru ta' Sant' Ursola fil-Belt Valletta

Filwaqt li nifrahlek għall-publikazzjoni tiegħek, nixtieqek tgħidli għaliex inti tqis il-ġrajja ta' 420 sena ta' ħajja tal-Monasteru ta' Sant' Ursola fil-Belt Valletta bħala "ġrajja stupenda"?

Ilni aktar minn ħamsa u għoxrin sena kappillan tal-monasteru, li illum sar biċċa minni wkoll. Naħseb li nafu sew. Naf is-sorijiet waħda waħda. Naf sew kemm nies iħabbtu l-bieb tal-monasteru jew iċemplu "kuljum" biex dawn l-erwieħ kontemplattivi jitolbu għalihom. Naf kemm il-Providenza ta' Alla tieqaf magħhom ukoll. Imma nistqarr li l-ġrajja tagħhom għextha wkoll, u aħjar, għaliex kelli x-xorti li norganizza u nqalleb fil-ġrajja tagħhom miktuba fir-registri u l-karti ta' l-Arkivji tagħhom. Tagħrif mitqal deheb li bħala studjuż ta' l-istorja saħħarni u hekk komplejt infittex dwarhom f'arkivji oħra, pubbliċi u privati, f'Malta u barra. Veru "ġrajja stupenda", miktuba kollha kemm hi fuq dokumenti originali.

Hassejt li ma kontx dħalt għal biċċa xogħol faċli, ridt insewwi wkoll

dak li kien kiteb fuq fuq haddieħor. Kitba, kważi dejjem, mhux korretta għal kollox. Kont fil-vantaġġ li ma kienx diffiċili għalija li nidhol fil-monasteru, li jien kappillan tiegħu. Terġa hdimt għal seba' snin fil-Biblijoteka Nazzjonali bħala inkarigat mill-katalogar ta' l-Arkivju ta' l-Ordni ta' San Ġwann. Hawn ukoll, kelli okkażjoni tad-deheb li ma tliethiex. Ġbart ħafna materjal importanti, li flimkien ma' dak ta' l-Arkivju publiku tan-nutara, komplew żewqu din il-ġrajja moħbija.

Verament okkażjoni-jiet rari bħal dawn, kull kitieb nistħajjel li jsejthom "stupendi". Kont f'qagħda li nosserva hekk mill-viċin il-ħjut kollha li jagħtuna n-nisġa ta' ħajja ta' erwieħ magħżulin b'vokazzjoni speċjali biex joqogħdu qrib il-Mulej aktar minna, fit-talb u fix-xogħol.

Fl-introduzzjoni tiegħek inti ktibt li l-kitba tal-ġrajja tal-Monasteru Giovannita, li kif għidt tajjeb int, hija l-unika ħaja ħajja li fadlilna sal-lum minn żmien il-Kavallieri, ħsibt li ser tkun biċċa xogħol faċli.

Għaliex fil-fatt ma kienx hekk?

Jekk wiehed iħares lejn il-biblijografija twila li ntużat, jitebaħ kemm ix-xogħol ma kienx faċli. Malli rajt quddiem i-arkivju tal-monasteru u l-ħafna registri, tal-bidu l-legati bil-pergamena u aktar tard bil-kartun, flimkien ma' volumi ħoxnin, b'mijiet ta' dokumenti, ħsibt li kelli quddiem materjal aktar milli kelli bżonn biex insawwar din il-ġrajja. Imma malli meddejt idejja biex l-ewwel norganizza l-istess arkivju, fis-indunajt li kelli bżonn ħafna materjal ieħor li kien nieqes.

Per eżempju: id-dokument tal-fundazzjoni, li għadu jeżisti, minn dejjem kien magħruf bħala *Bulla*, u bħala tali wiehed jistenna li jsib is-*Supplica*, jew talba li l-Gran Mastru Verdala għamel lill-Papa. Din ma sibtha rreġistrata mkien, la f'Malta u lanqas fl-Arkivji Vatikan. Hawn issuspettajt li d-dokument pontifiċju kien *Breve*, mogħti *gratis* mill-Papa *sub anula piscatoris*. Imma biex sib l-original tiegħu fil-Vatikan kellhom igerbu s-snin; għaliex biex tagħqad il-volum li kien

jidher nieqes, fil-fatt kien għal-legatura!

Imma forsi dak li l-aktar habbatni kien il-fatt li jinsab nieqes l-ewwel registru li fih jitnizzlu l-ismijiet; id-dhul, novizzjat, u professjoni tas-sorijiet, mill-bidu (1582) sl-1754. Kważi mitejn sena li swewli snin ta' riċerka l-aktar fl-arkivji tan-nutara biex stajt nibni l-ġrajja ta' l-ewwel snin. Ta' min iżid ukoll, li l-materjal ta' l-arkivju tal-monasteru mhux sħiħ. Volumi neqsin li min jaf fejn spiċċaw, u oħrajn miktubin b'mod xott għall-aħħar. Dan il-vojt kollu hadli ż-żmien aktar milli stennejt biex nimlieh. Il-Kavallieri ħallewlna hafna monumenti, knejjes u palazzi. Imma l-unika haġa ħajja, minkejja li gerbu tant snin, li għadha sa llum hija l-Monasteru Giovannita, ta' Sant' Ursola fil-Belt Valletta.

Xi jġieghlek tqis l-istorja tal-Monasteru ta' Sant' Ursola li zamm haj l-Ordni ta' San Ġwann fi ġżiritna bhala "wahda nteressanti"?

Jitqarraq dak li jahseb li din hi ġrajja ta' komunita' ta' sorijiet magħluqin wara l-grad tal-hadid, biex hadd ma jfixkilhom jitolbu, u daqshekk. L-ewwelnett meta l-Gran Mastru Verdala waqqafhom, kellu frasu li jwaqqaf monasteru skond ir-regola u l-kariżma partikulari ta' l-Ordni ta' San Ġwann, Imma b'impenn, jew

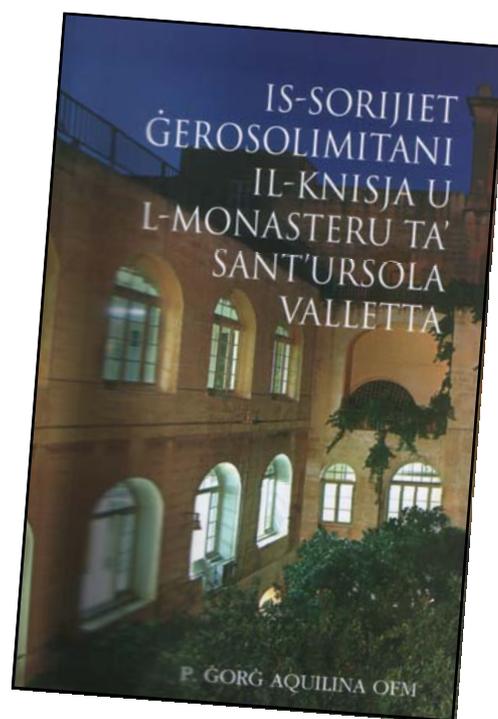
vokazzjoni speċjali li dawn jitolbu għall-Ordni u għal Malta. Vokazzjoni li għadha sejra llum ukoll.

Imma fuq kollox hemm hafna ġrajjet li jagħmlu lil dan il-monasteru uniku. Sa mill-bidu tal-waqfien tiegħu kien jgħbor fih lil kull min kellu vokazzjoni bla distinzjoni. Dan jirrizulta mir-riċerka u minn kif ġew identifikati s-sorijiet, ulied in-nobbli, profesjonisti, a rtigjani, nies foqra li daħlu bla dota, jew wahda mnaqqsa, jew haseb li jhallas għalihom xi hadd. Bla ma niżbalja, ngħid li minn dejjem kien il-monasteru miftuħ għal kulhadd. Interessanti l-fatt uniku wkoll li l-Kavallieri kien jqisuh bhala *il nostro monastero*, il-monasteru tagħna, eċċ. U bhala tali kien jgħinhom it-Teżor ta' l-Ordni.

Imma malli l-Ordni ġie mkeċċi minn Malta minn Napuljun, in-nuqqas u l-faqar għafas fuqhom bis-sħiħ. Kien hemm żmien meta soffrew il-ġuħ. Imma bla ma' nidhol f'dettalji oħra, li wiehed jista' jaqrahom fil-ktieb, mir-riċerka sibt, li minkejja li dawn ħutna jinsabu maqtuġhin minnies ta' barra, b'dana kollu għexu l-istess ġrajjet tal-kotra tal-poplu.

L-istudju mbaġħad tal-Kostituzzjonijiet (ligijiet tal-Monasteru) tagħhom, urienu kemm minn dejjem kienu kburin li jharsu r-Regola ta' l-Ordni ta' San Ġwann. U dan minkejja li

kien hemm żmien, meta l-istess Ordni f'Ruma, lanqas biss kien jaf bihom! Dan l-istudju serva wkoll, mill-bidu tar-riċerka, biex l-Ordni f'Ruma jagħrfu bhala monasteru li "għadu jhaddan" l-ispirtwalita' Giovannita.



Tahseb li wara tant snin il-Monasteru għadu jilhaq il-ghan li għalih twaqqaf?

Meta thares lejn iż-żmien li għadda, tinduna b'ħafna tibdil li sehħ f'kull qasam tal-ħajja. Il-Monasteru għadda mill-istess tibdil. Ma' dan nżidu l-waqtiet ta' aġġornament, li hu tibdil ukoll, li sehħ fil-ħajja religjuża wkoll. Imma sostanzjalment il-karatteristiċi partikulari tal-Monasteru baqgħu dawk li kienu fl-imġhoddi. Insemmi ftit eżempji. L-istil ta' ħajja sempliċi u

ta' faqar.

Waħda mis-sorpriži li sib t ma' wiċċi bhala Kappillan, u li laqtitni ħafna kien il-faqar. Stennejt li ser insib tiżjin b'ghama antika u għadd kbir ta' kwadri li jzejnu s-swali u kuriduri; xi nfermerija li thabbatha ma' klinika żghira, u ħwejjeg bħal dawn. Tqarraqt. Hawn ġew ma ssibx lussu!

Hekk wara li bil-kalma studjajt kull aspekt tal-ħajja f'dan il-Monasteru, nistqarr li għadhom jeżistu dawk il-valuri tal-bidu; bħalma huma l-ispirtu ta' talb privat u flimkien, bl-intenzjoni partikulari għall-poplu tal-ġzejjer tagħna; l-ubbidjenza ferrieħa, l-ispirtu ta' servizz bejniethom, valuri li jagħmilhom komunita' ferrieħa. U minkejja li ma għandhomx il-kumditajiet u l-libertajiet, li għandna aħna li ngħixu barra, dawn kif jgħidulek li ma jonqoshom xejn!

Tista' tispjegali għaliex tqis li l-ħajja ġewwa l-Monasteru matul is-snin tirrifletti l-ħajja li għexu missirijietna minn żmien għal ieħor?

Studju attent tar-registri u dokumenti oħra, b'sorpriża oħra għaliya, urienu kemm verament kienu għadhom parti ħajja mill-poplu tagħna. Għexu bħal kulhadd, is-sabiħ u l-ikrah tal-ħajja, it-tibdil storiku tal-ġzejjer tagħna, u xi drabi batew forsi aktar minn haddieħor.

Immagina per eżempju s-swied il-qalb meta sabu ruħhom iżolati minn kulhadd, sa minn nieshom stess, waqt l-imblokk tal-Francizi, u kwazi bil-ġuħ.

U x'ingħidu għat-twerwir li għaddew minnu bil-bombi jarawhom jisplodu fil-port u s-swar ta' taħthom? Dan biex ma nsemmux il-pesta, il-kolera, it-tifojde, u mard ieħor li mess lilhom ukoll.

Inqis li dawn ir-registri kienu għaliya mera, li fiha rajt ix-xbieha ta' komunita' li għexet l-istorja sħiħa, xejn anqas minn niesna. Qatt ma kellhom renti kbar x'jagħmel tajjeb, biex iserħu rashom. Dejjem u għadhom jiddependu għall-ħajja, mill-ġenerożita tal-poplu tagħna. Għalhekk forsi, minkejja li jinsabu hemm ġew, jgħixu grajjietna hekk mill-qrib, għax jiddependu minna.

Għaliex il-Knisja għadha sal-lum tapprezza u tqis il-ħajja klawstrali ta' ħtiega għall-ħajja ta' l-istess Knisja?

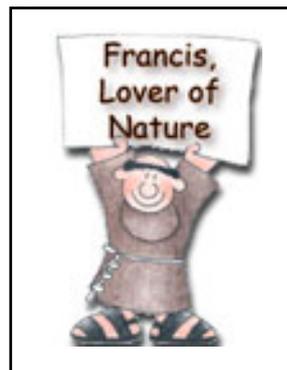
Naħseb li l-Knisja, qatt daqs dawn l-aħħar snin ma' kellmitna fuq il-kontribut u l-ħtiega ta' dawn l-erwieħ ikkonsagra-ti, li għażlu li jgħixu fil-klawsura. Insemmi biss żewġ dokumenti. Fil-*Vita Consacrata* (1996, no.59) jingħad li l-Knisja tqis il-"klwasura bhala twegiba ħielsa ta' mħabba... Il-post ta' xirka spiritwali bejn Alla u l-aħwa, fejn in-nuqqas ta' spażju u r-

relazzjonijiet ftit ħafna man-nies iwasslu biex jizirgħu fil-qlob il-ġid ta' l-Evangelju".

Mhux biss, imma, jgħid il-Papa: "lil dawn is-sorrijiet għeziez jien inrodd ħajr, u, fl-istess waqt inħegġgħom biex jibqgħu fidili lejn il-ħajja klawstrali skond il-kariżma propja tagħhom... il-ħajja kontemplattiva tiswa wisq aktar minn kull hidma għax tnissel qawwa liema bhala ta' apostolat u ta' missjoni".

Fl-Istruzzjoni *Veri Sponsa* (1999) jingħad ukoll li l-klawsura: "ħija tassew rigal imqiegħda fil-qalba tal-misteru tal-komunjoni ekkleżjali, miexja pass pass mal-missjoni apostolika ta' dawk li jaħdmu u jbatu għax-xandir ta' l-Evangelju. "Bil-ħajja tagħhom is-sorrijiet klawstrali: "ifissru b'mod l-aktar ċar il-għan li lejħ sejra kull komunita' ekkleżjali".

Naħseb jiena li dawn iż-żewġ siltiet huma biżżejjed biex wiehed ikun jaf kif il-Knisja thares lejn dawn hutna. U aħna wkoll għandu jkollna kelma ta' ringrazzjament għal dak kollu li qed jagħmlu għalina, bis-sagrificċju ta' ħajijthom.



IR-REFUGĠATI F'PAJJIŻNA

Dawn l-aħħar snin żdied in-numru ta' barranin li jispiċċaw fuq xtutna jitolbu rifuġju fostna. Quddiem din ir-realtà il-**Kunsill tas-Superjuri Maġġuri tar-Reliġjużi** jistqarr dan li ġej:

1. Kull bniedem, hu min hu, ġej minn fejn ġej, għandu l-istess dinjità u valur fl-għajnejn t'Alla, għalhekk kull bniedem jeħtieġ li jkollu l-istess dinjità u valur fl-għajnejn tagħna l-bnedmin. Ahna lkoll aħwa, ulied ta' Mis-sier wiehed.

2. Ahna nemmnu fi kliem Kristu: 'Dak li tagħmlu ma' l-iċken fost ħuti tkunu qed tagħmluh miegħi' u 'Min jilqa' lilkom jilqa' lili' (Mark 9:37).



3. Nemmnu li l-ġenerożità tradizzjonali tal-poplu tagħna hija kbira biżżejjed biex ma tieqafx f'li tgħin bi flusha lil dawk li huma 'l bogħod, bħal ma' għamilna mal-vittmi tat-Tsunami. Nemmnu li hija kapaċi wkoll tilqa' lil dawk li, minhabba sit-wazzjonijiet ta' ingustizzja f'pajjiżhom, jispiċċaw f'pajjiżna u qrib tagħna jitolbu l-għajnunna.

4. Nifhmu u napprezzaw il-limitazzjonijiet u n-nuqqas ta' riżorsi ta' pajjiżna. Dan, iżda, m'għandux ifisser li nagħlqu qalbna għal min jirrikorri lejna f'mument ta' bżonn.

5. Nikkundannaw kull xorta ta' razzizmu. Ikun ta' gwaj kbir għar-ruħ ta' pajjiżna jekk fostna jerfa' rasu r-razziżmu u kull xorta ta' diskriminazzjoni bejn bniedem u ieħor. Din hija pjaga kbira li tħassar il-qalb tajba u l-valuri sbieħ tal-poplu tagħna.

6. Nappoġġaw kull miżura li l-Gvern jista' jieħu biex itejjeb il-kundizzjonijiet tal-ħajja ta' dawk li jitolbu kenn f'pajjiżna u fid-determinazzjoni li jittieħdu passi legali kontra kull min jinkuraġġixxi r-razziżmu fostna.

7. Filwaqt li nappoġġaw lill-awtoritajiet fil-miżuri li hemm bżonn biex tithares is-sigurtà u l-ekonomija tal-pajjiż, inheggu biex jittieħdu wkoll il-miżuri li hemm bżonn biex jitharsu dejjem u f'kull ċirkustanza d-dinjità u d-drittijiet ta' kull persuna, sew Maltin sew barranin.

8. Bħala Reliġjużi, nesprimu l-apprezzament tagħna għal dawk fost ħutna, lajċi, Reliġjużi u saċerdoti, li qed jaħdmu bla heda favur dawn ħutna immigranti fil-bżonn. Nirringrazzjaw lil dawk fostna li offrew jew qed joffru djar, kunventi, flus u għajnuniet oħra, kulhadd skond il-possibilitajiet tiegħu, biex issir din l-opra tal-ħniena: 'Ilqa' il-barrani'.

9. Is-sejha tagħna bħala Reliġjużi hija xhieda ħajja ta' kemm l-imħabba t'Alla tfittex l-ewwel u qabel kollox x'se tagħti bla ma tibza' mill-prezz li titlob l-imħabba ta' għajrta.

Zjara tal-W.R.P. Vigarju Ġenerali, P. Francesco Bravi, OFM, u tas-Segretarju għall-Evangelizzazzjoni, P. Boccanelli, OFM.

Nhar is-Sibt, 26 ta' Frar, għall-ħabta tat-3.45 pm waslu Malta, fi triqthom lejn Tripli, il-Vigarju tal-Ordni, P. Francesco Bravi, u s-Segretarju għall-Evangelizzazzjoni, P. Boccanelli. Billi l-għan tagħhom kien li jisthargu sewwa l-qagħda fil-missjoni tal-Libja, ġuridament afdana lill-Provinċja tagħna, xtaqu li qabel xejn jisimgħu minn għand il-Ministru Provinċjal u d-Definitorju dwar is-sitwazzjoni kif narawha aħna. Mal-Ministru Provinċjal ħadu sehem ukoll: P. Ġuzepp Beneditt Xuereb, P. Martin Coleiro, u Fra Stephen Magro.



Il-Vigarju staqsa jekk hemm xi diffikultajiet speċjali. Mid-diskussjoni deher ċar li min-naħa tagħna, lesti nibqgħu nagħtu l-għajnuniet meħtieġa mill-aħjar li nistgħu. Per eżempju, nibgħatu lil xi patri biex jgħin fil-formazzjoni kemm tal-patrijiet kif ukoll tas-sorijiet permezz ta' konferenzi aġġornati. Lesti wkoll nilqgħuhom fostna kemm-il darba jixtiequ jiġu jqattgħu xi jiem ta' mistrieħ.

Il-Vigarju semma' li l-Konvenzjoni tipprevedi l-ħolqien ta' strutturi li jkun hemm bżonn. Deher li jkun jaqbel li xi hadd mill-patrijiet fil-Libja jkun maħtur bħala Superjur tal-Missjoni, u jkun hu l-ħolqa bejn il-patrijiet u l-Ministru Provinċjal. Qabel tittiehed deċiżjoni, hu beħsiebu jisma' xi jgħidu l-Aħwa fil-Libja.

Intqal ukoll li hu neċessarju li dawk il-patrijiet li jkunu se jmorru jaqdu ministeru pastorali fil-Libja, qabel xejn jgħaddu xi żmien fi Brussels. Hemm jiksbu t-tagħrif meħtieġ dwar il-ħidma missjunarja fost il-musulmani, u fl-istess ħin isir dixxerniment dwar il-karattru u l-attitudini tagħhom.



Il-Mulej qam tassew, Hallelujah!

L-Għid it-tajjeb

L-Editor

FESTA TAL-PROVINĊJA U TAL-MINISTRU PROVINĊJAL

Nhar is-Sibt, 19 ta' Frar, fil-kunvent ta' Santa Marija ta' Ġesu' giet iċċelebrata l-festa tal-Provinċja u tal-Ministru Provinċjal.

Ġiet iċċelebrata adorazzjoni u wara saret ikla fraterna.

Il-Ministru Provinċjal kellu l-opportunita' wkoll jaqsam l-esperjenza li huwa għamel reċentement fl-Afrika ta' Isfel, fejn tkellem dwar il-futur pozittiv li hemm fil-kontinent Afrikan. Huwa tkellem ukoll dwar il-vizta kanonika li huwa se jagħmel u dwar dan kiteb ittra personali lil kull wieħed mill-aħwa tal-provinċja.



Il-Postulanti Sqallin F'Malta

“Il-bniedem jipproponi u Alla jiddisponi” nghidu spiss. Dan verament deher f'dawn il-hames tjiem li għamilna flimkien mall-postulanti Sqallin. Qabel xejn, il-mawra tagħhom kienet 'short notice' u allura ma kienetx faċli għall-organizzaturi biex jorganizzaw kollox. Biex tkompli tikkumpli l-biċċa tax-xogħol, il-mawra kellha tiġi postposta b'gurnata, minhabba l-maltemp li nqala'. Mill-programm kollu tlietna gurnata u għalhekk kollox kellu jiġi ippjanat mill-ġdid. L-intoppi lill-Isqallin ma naqsux għax kellhom postulant ma jiflaħx u kien hemm il-preokkupazzjoni minn naħa tall-mastru. Biss ir-rieda ta' Alla wriet mod iehor għall-pjanijiet tagħna. Hu hadilna gurnata, però tagħna lura tnejn. It-tlieta kellhom jitolqu lura imma minhabba li inqala' l-maltemp kellhom jitolqu il-Ħamis fil-ghodu.

Esperjenza bħal din mhix faċli tiddekriviha fi ftit kliem għax għaddejna minn hafna mumententi sbieħ u uniċi. Qabel xejn, kif waslu saru jafu li konna ser inkunu flimkien għan-novizzjat gewwa Fonte Colombo. Originarjament il-mawra kienet minn xewqa tal-Mastru li jsir jaf aktar lill-Malta. Kienet din ix-xewqa, li fethitilna orizzonti ġodda għat-tnejn li aħna. Bis-saħħa t'hekk iltqajna ma dawk li kienu ser ikunu magħna għan-novizzjat. Pass importanti għalina; għax wara li tkun għamilt hbieb issibha aktar faċli meta tmur għall esperjenza ġdida bħal din. Haga importanti ukoll hu il-fatt li nfethet il-komunikazzjoni bejn dawn iż-żewġ provinċji li huma tant qrib xulxin.



Haga li laqtitni hu kemm hu sabiħ li fil-formazzjoni tkun numru imdaqqs. Titgħallem hafna affarijiet, għax kulhadd ikollu x'joffri. Waqt ir-rikreazzjoni tgħidx kemm kienu jkantawlna kant sabiħ, u jidher il-fatt li huma mgħallmin tajjeb hafna. Dehret hafna l-unità fid-diversità, kollha b'karattri differenti biss kollha jifthiemu. Nammira wkoll fihom, il-fatt li huma tant ferħanin meta fl-istess hin għandhom programm strett hafna. Bħala postulandat jistgħu imorru darbtejn biss f'sena id-dar. Fatt iehor hu li kollha kienu bis-sandli minkejja il-ksieħ tremend li kellna tul dawk il-jiem. Minkejja dan kollu kienu dejjem ferħana u qatt ma kont tismagħhom igergru. U dan milli stajt nara ġibed hafna l-attenzjoni tan-nies li rawhom fit-toroq tagħna.

Żorna u dorna hafna postijiet flimkien iżda l-aqwa esperjenza għalija u anke għalihom, kienet il-mawra għand is-sorijiet Klarissi. Kulhadd baqa' milqut mill-laqgħa sabiħa li tawna. Wara konferenza fuq in-Nawfragju ta' San Pawl, qsamna l-ewkaristija flimkien. Kienet vera quddiesa sabiħa għax giet animata kemm mis-sorijiet u kemm minnhom. Wara l-quddies komplejna mas-sorijiet nitkellmu. Ferraħna lill-xulxin b'kant mill-isbaħ. Il-postulanti kantawlna il-*Benedizione* ta' Santa Klara, li messet qalb kulhadd. Wara li hsibna li kien wasal il-hin li nerggħu

lura, il-Badessa iddeċidiet li nidhlu naraw il-ġnien ġewwa. Hutna ta' Sqalija baqgħu mistagħġba għax ma hasbux li qatt kienu ser jidhlu f'monasteru. Baqgħu imsahħra bil-ġmiel ta' ġnien li raw. Issahħru b'mod speċjali bin-niċċa tal-Madonna, fejn flimkien kantajna it-Tota Pulchra. Wara tant mument i sbieħ u tant għejja irritornajna lejn il-Porzjuncola, għall-ikel u anke fit rikreazzjoni flimkien.



Ir-rieda ta' Alla riedet li dawn l-esperjenzi sbieħ nerggħu ngħixuhom. Peress li ma setgħux jitolqu lura minħabba il-maltemp, kellna l-opportunità li l-Erbgħa nerggħu immorru għand il-Klarissi għad-dhul ta' Postulanta ġdida fil-monasteru. Kienet esperjenza ġdida anke għalija għax qatt ma kont rajt kif tkun iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-postulandat tas-sorijiet Klarissi. Wara i-ċelebrazzjoni tal-quddiesa Helen dahlet fil-monasteru u kantajna flimkien mal-Klarissi. Kienu verament mument i ta' ferħ għal kull min kien prezenti. Wara li spicċa kollox il-postulanti tant haġu pjaċir li anqas riedu jitolqu, tant li wasalna tard għall-ikel. Għalkemm kulhadd kien għajjen minn hamest ijiem mimlijin daqs bajda, kulhadd kien kuntent u filgħaxija domna mhux hażin flimkien, nitkellmu u nkantaw.

Kienu jiem sempliċi imma sbieħ li mhux ser ninsihom qatt. Kienu jiem li fihom inbnejna ilkoll flimkien u konna ta' kuraġġ u għajjnuna għal xulxin. Esperjenzi bħal dawn iħallu marka positiva għall-ħajtek kollha

Esperjenza Unika

Sur Editur,

Kelli l-grazzja li bejn il-15 u s-16 ta' Jannar 2005 attendejt għall-Irtir organizzat mic-Cirkolu "Gioventu' Cattolica" tal-Belt Valletta f'Porziuncola Retreat House, Bahar ic-Cagħaq. Kienet esperjenza unika. Għandi fidi shiha li halliet hafna gid fost dawk prezenti bħalma halliet fija. Filwaqt li niringrazzja fuq kollox lill-Mulej Alla, nixtieq inrodd hajr lil xi nies li bla dubju kienu strumentali biex għal darb'ohra dan l-Irtir iħalli l-frott. Grazzi lil Charles Dalli u lil shabu tal-Grupp X-tend, lil Vince Fabri u lil Paul (Bibi) Camilleri, li tul l-Irtir dewquna muzika religjuza b'messagg, hafna minnha kompozizzjoni tagħhom stess.

Grazzi speċjali lil Fr. Joe Buttigieg, Kapuccin, li mexxa dan l-Irtir b'mod stupend. Bl-istil car u dirett tiegħu naf li rnexxielu jcaqlaq il-qlub ta' xi whud, li inkluzi dawk li stqarrew li kienu l-boghod mis-sagramenti. Dawk li kienu jistennew wara l-bieb tal-kamra tiegħu s-Sibt bil-lejl u l-Hadd filghodu kienu xhieda ta' dan.

F'isem shabi niringrazzja wkoll lil Fr. Julian Sammut OFM, id-Direttur ta' Porziuncola House. Stajna naraw b'għajnejna, immissu b'idejna u 'nduqu' l-progress li sar f'din id-Dar. Sibna tistenniena merhba Frangiskana. Sibna kollox f'postu organizzat, indafa mill-aqwa, servizz shih u bi tbissima, ikel bnin u abbondanti, u fuq kollox postijiet ideali biex wiehed jingabar għal xi hin quddiem Gesu' fit-Tabernaklu. – Domenic Camilleri Hal Safi.

Lehen is-Sewwa, 12 ta' Frar 2005

JUM IS-SEJHA FRANGISKANA

- Beatu Nazju Falzon, B`Kara: Il-Ħadd 3 ta` April 2005
- San Frangisk, Hamrun: Il-Ħadd 24 ta` April 2005
- Sant Antnin, Ghajnsielem: Il-Ħadd 1 ta` Mejju 2005
- Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor, Sliema: Il-Ħadd 8 ta` Mejju 2005
- Santa Marija ta` Ġesu`, Rabat: Il-Ħadd 15 ta` Mejju 2005
- Santa Marija ta` Ġesu`, Valletta: Il-Ħadd 29 ta` Mejju 2005
- Ġesu` l-Ħabib, Sliema: Il-Ħadd 5 ta` Ġunju 2005
- Kappella Madonna ta` Liesse, Valletta: Il-Ħadd 12 ta` Ġunju 2005
- Santa Marija ta` l-Angli, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq: Il-Ħadd 19 ta` Ġunju 2005

Bħala preparazzjoni għal dan il-jum, fil-knejjes u ċentri tagħna jsir Talb u Adorazzjoni Ewkaristika.



Talba Għall-Vokazzjonijiet

Mulej Ġesu', nitolbuk issejjah aktar zghazagh biex joffru hajjithom għalik u għal huthom fl-Ordni Frangiskan. Nitolbuk għaz-zghazagh li qed iwiegħbu għas-sejha Frangiskana. Imlihom bil-kuragg u l-fidi. Nitolbuk għal ġenituri. Imlihom bil-ferħ meta ssejjah lil xi hadd minn uliedhom għall-hajja ikkonsagrata lilek.



Pasquetta 2005

**It-Tnejn
28 ta' Marzu**

**Niltaqghu
d-Dar tal-Kleru**

Il-Gwardjani huma mhegħga javzaw lil Martin kemm ġejjin mill-Aħwa mhux aktar tard mill-Erbgħa, 24 ta' Marzu 2005. Min ma jinfurmax qabel, ifisser li mhu ġej hadd mill-komunita'.

Iċċelebrata l-festa ta' San Pawl fil-Libja

Nhar il-Hamis, 10 ta' Frar 2005, giet iċċelebrata l-festa tan-Nawfragju ta' San Pawl fil-Knisja ta' San Frangisk, gewwa Tripli fil-Libya.

Fis-7.00 p.m. giet iċċelebrata quddiesa mill-E.T. Mons Sylvester Magro, OFM, isqof ta' Benghazi. Wara l-quddiesa sar riċeviment fis-sala tal-knisja.

Ghal din il-festa kien hemm preżenti l-Ambaxxatur il-ġdid Malti, Dr. Joe

Cassar, il-Konslu Ġenerali s-Sur Robert Aquilina, is-sorijiet Maltin mill-Kongregazzjonijiet tal-Ulied tal-Qalb ta' Ġesu' u Frangiskani Missjunarji ta' Marija, familji Tripolitani Maltin u nisa Maltin miżżewġin Libjani.

Mons. Giovanni Martinelli, OFM, Isqof ta' Tripli assista għall-quddiesa, u feraħ u ngħaqad mal-poplu Malti kollu b'mod speċjali mal-komunita' Maltija gewwa

Tripli fringrazzjament lil Alla għall-fidi tal-Maltin u għar-rabta li l-Knisja tal-Libja dejjem kellha mal-Knisja ta' Malta. Huwa awgura lill-Maltin li jahdmu fil-Libja biex iżommu l-identita' nisranija tagħhom u biex jagħtu xiehda tajba quddiem nies ta' religjon differenti.

Dun Daniel Farrugia, qassis Malti li qed jagħti s-servizz pastorali tiegħu fi Tripli kkordina din il-festa.

L-AHBAR fil-qosor

Il-Ministru Provincjal, Fra Paul Galea, OFM, irritorna Malta wara li pparteċipa għal-laqgħat taż-żewġ konferenzi COMONA u SUBSAHARIA li saru fl-Afrika ta' Isfel. Rapport dettaljat ta' dawn il-laqgħat u xi ritratti se jkunu ppublikati fil-harġa li jmiss ta' L-AHBAR. Wara li rritorna Malta, huwa mill-ewwel beda l-vizita kanonika, u li se jkompli matul ix-xahar ta' Marzu.

Fra Dijonisju Mintoff, OFM, gie maħtur membru tal-Kummissjoni Ambjent fi ħdan is-Segreteria Pastorali tal-Knisja. L-għan ta' din il-Kummissjoni huwa li tohloq kuxjenza dwar ir-responsabbilta' u l-etika lejn l-ambjent, tfassal policy-gwida dwar l-ambjent għal min għandu responsabbilta' fil-Knisja, f'Malta, u toffri pariri tekniċi/xejntifiċi fuq każijiet u kwistjonijiet speċifiċi lill-awtoritajiet tal-Knisja.

Fra Norbert Ellul Vincenti, OFM, ukoll gie maħtur minn Mons. Arċisqof, membru fil-Kummissjoni Kultura

Fra Charles Grech, OFM se jmur Benghazi sabiex iwettaq hidma pastorali matul il-gimgha mqaddsa u fl-ottava ta' l-Għid.

Fra Noel Muscat, OFM, ipparteċipa għall-Kunsill Internazzjonali tas-Segretarji tal-Formazzjoni u Studji, li l-Ordni organizza f'Seoul, il-Korea t'Isfel, bejn l-14 - 26 ta' Frar 2005. Fra Noel huwa s-Segretarju għall-Formazzjoni u Studji fl-Art Imqaddsa. It-tema tal-kunsill kienet *Inter-religious dialogue for peace in the Asian Culture*. Bhalissa Fra Noel jinsab Malta. Huwa se jirritorna l-Art Imqaddsa fit-13 ta' Marzu.

Fra Sebastian Camilleri, OFM, se jirritorna Malta għal kollox. Huwa wettaq hidma pastorali fl-Awstralja.

Fra Raymond Camilleri, OFM, jinsab rikoverat fl-isptar Karen Grech. Huwa jinsab fil-ward MS3. Nawgurawlu fejqan ta' malajr.

HUNA FRA BERNARD BARTOLO OFM

We were all taken by surprise when, on January 8th, 2005, reached us the news of the sudden death of Fr. Bernard Bartolo, ofm. He took ill on Thursday, 6th January, was rushed to hospital, and two days later sister death opened for him the gates of heaven.

Fr. Bernard was Rector of a small chapel in Sliema, dedicated to “Ġesu’ Habib” (Jesus our Friend). He *invented* this devotion himself, taking inspiration from his constant study and meditation on the Gospel of St John. He had fixed the feast for 8th January, and had prepared everything to celebrate it with his parishioners. The Lord, however, had other plans for him: He, too, had prepared for him a celebration in heaven.

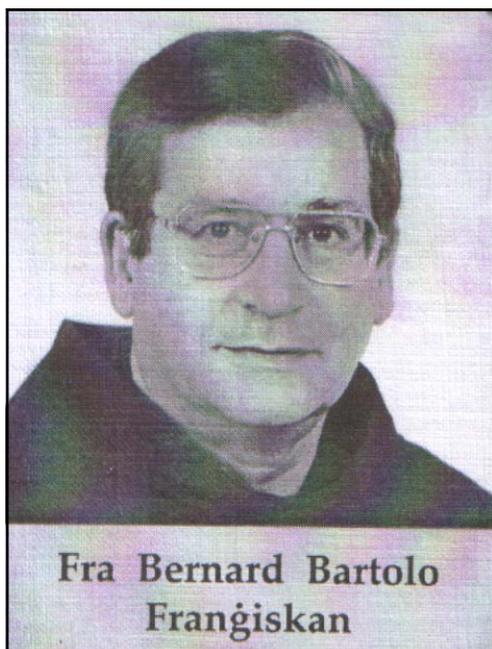
Fr. Bernard was born in Sliema, on 12th October 1934, and baptized in our parish, dedicated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the 17th of October. For a good number of years he was a member of the Society of Christian Doctrine (M.U.S.E.U.M), founded by Fr. George Preca, declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II on 9th May, 2001. For seven years he worked as skilled labourer at Malta Dry Docks.

Fr. Bernard joined the Order in 1957, receiving the habit on 15th of October. He was solemnly professed on 1 November 1961 at St. Mary of the Angels, Assisi. After finishing the theological course, he was ordained priest by Mons. Pierantoni, ex Minister General, on 19th March 1964. After ordination, he studied for one year at the Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, obtaining Licentiate in Theology in 1966.

Back in the Province, Fr. Bernard undertook various responsibilities. He was Master of theology students in Valletta, Guardian at Sliema, Promoter of Vocations, Spiritual Assistant to Secular Franciscans and Juventus Antoniana. For 27 years he taught religion at a Girls’ School run by Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

ikompli fil-paġna li jmiss

Artiklu Patri Bernard Bartolo OFM (1934-2004) deher fir-rivista *Tas-Sliema - Lehen il-Kunsill Tiegħek*.



NEKROLOĠJU

8 ta’ Jannar 2005

Fl-isptar San Luqa, P. Benrard Bartolo minn tas-Sliema. Liċenzjat fit-Teoloġija, għalliem għal 27 sena, qeda f’kemm il-kariga fil-Provincja, fosthom kien Gwardjan, Definitur, Vigarju u Provincjal. Wettaq hidma pastorali fiċ-Ċentru Ġesu’ l-Habib, li fl-1993 bil-hidma tiegħu reġa nbena mill-ġdid. Bniedem ħabrieki u konferenzier infittex.

Eta’ 71, Reliġjuż 48, Saċerdot 40.

When not engaged in ministry, Fr. Bernard always kept himself busy, studying the Word of God. He was fond of St. Paul and St. John, especially.

He excelled himself in the ministry of preaching, giving retreats to priests and religious, hearing confessions and offering spiritual guidance to various categories of people. People found it easy to approach Fr. Bernard, and many did so, seeking his advice, guidance and word of encouragement. On his part, he was always ready to listen and help.

During the Chapter held at Baħar-iċ-Ċaġħaq in 1996 he was elected Minister Provincial. He made it a point to hold a fraternal visitation every year. As was expected of him, he also visited the maltese friars engaged in the pastoral ministry in Australia, Canada, Honduras and U.K.

The funeral took place in our parish, Sliema, on Monday, 10th January, 2005. Apart from almost all the friars of the Province, many other religious priests took part in the concelebration, presided over by Fr. Paul Galea, Minister Provincial. The church was filled to capacity, clear evidence of the respect and love he enjoyed by all those who knew him.

May the Lord give him eternal rest, and the reward he deserved for his service offered with joyfully and with a generous heart.

*Il-Kelma ta' Alla f'darek
Tagħlim fuq il-Bibbja
Kull xahar ircievi fuljett ta' tagħlim siewi.*

Hargu digà:

- Kif Taqra il-Bibbja,
- Genesi, Ktieb in-Nisel,
- Ezodu, Ktieb il-Helsien,
- Levitiku, Ktieb il-Qdusija,
- Numri, Ktieb id-Dezert,
- Dewteronomju, Ktieb l-Imhabba,
- San Mark, Min hu Gesù?
- San Mattew, Gesù hu l-Messija,
- San Luqa, Vangelu Bizzilla!
- L-Atti ta' l-Apostli, Bil-qawwa ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu
- San Gwann, Rajna l-Glorja Tiegħu
- L-Apokalissi, Id-Dramm tar-Rebħa
- L-Għanja ta' l-Għanjiet, Imhabba tal-Genn!
- Il-Ktieb ta' Tobia, Fedelta fit-tigrib
- Il-Ktieb ta' Guditta, Mara ta' Qawwa
- L-Ittra ta' Gakbu
- L-Ittra ta' Guda
- Geremija, Profeta tat-Tbatija
- Baruk, Shah fil-fidi
- Lamentazzjonijiet, Biki u thewдин
- 1 Tessalonkin, Ejja Mulej Gesu
- 2 Tessalonkin, Sabar fl-Istennija
- L-Ittra lill-Filippin, Ittra b'Qalb Miftuha



Kalendarju

**KUMITAT TAL-
 PATRIJET ŻGHAŻAGH
 GHAĊ-ĊELEBRAZZJONI-
 JIET TA' LULJU 2007**

Id-Definitorju Ġenerali għażel lil Fra Anton Farrugia, OFM, bħala rappreżentant tal-Konferenza tal-Lingwa Ngliza għall-kumitat tal-patrijet żgħażaġh ghaċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet li se jsiru f'Lulju 2007, fl-okkazjoni ta' 800 sena mit-twaqqif ta' l-Ordni tal-Patrijet Minuri.

Il-Ministri Provinċjali kollha ta' l-Ordni innominaw patri żgħażuġh, sabiex id-Definitorju Ġenerali jagħzel wiehed minn kull Konferenza.

FESTI U BIRTHDAYS MARZU

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Fra Ġużepp Vella | 11. Fra Joseph Magro |
| Fra Ġużepp Camilleri | 15. Fra Charles Wickman |
| Fra Joe Caruana | Fra Paul Attard |
| Fra Joe Bonello | 24. Fra Gabriel Micallef |
| Fra Ġużepp Debono | |
| Fra Joseph Magro | |
| 31. Fra Benjamin Galea | |

Awguri u Xewqat Sbieh!



F' DIN IL-ĦARĠA

MARZU 2005

The grace of our origin	2
4000 franġiskan jghixu fir-regjuni milquta mit-tsunami	11
Fraternitas	15
Messaġġ tal-Ministru Provinċjal - St. Paul's, Toronto	19
Maltese Mission - UK	20
Ċentru Pastorali Ġesu' l-Ħabib	24
San Franġisk u l-Ewkaristija	26
Ktieb iehor ta' Fra Ġorg Aquilina, OFM	28
Stqarrija tal-KSMR - Ir-refuġjati f'pajjizna	30
Żjara tal-Vigarju Ġenerali ta' l-Ordni f'Malta	31
Festa tal-Provinċja u tal-Ministru Provinċjal	32
Il-Postulanti Sqallin f'Malta	33
Jum is-Sejha Franġiskana	35
Ahbarijiet	36
Kalendarju	39

L-AĦBAR

EDITOR

*fra marcellino micallef ofm
 provofm@vol.net.mt*

**Kunvent tal-Franġiskani
 291, Triq San Pawl,
 Valletta VLT 07**

Tel. 21238218 Fax. 21231266