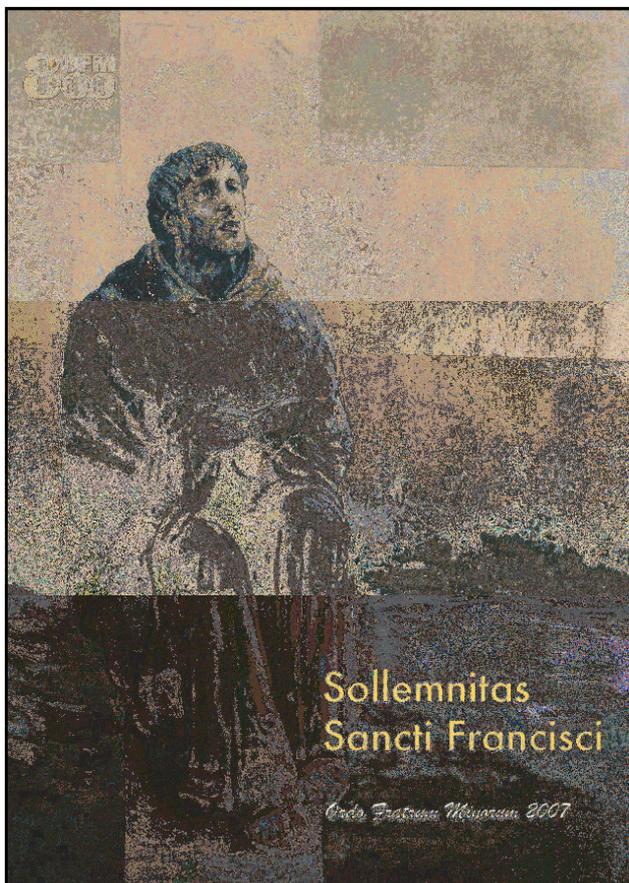


L-AHĦBAR



PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA TA' SAN PAWL APPOSTLU, MALTA. No. 127 1.10.2007

Fl-okkażjoni tal-Kanonizzazzjoni mill-Papa Benedittu XI, taż-żewġ qaddisin franġiskani San Antonio Galvao de Franca, OFM u San Simon ta' Lipnika, OFM il-bieraħ, il-Hadd, 30 ta' Settembru 2007, il-Provinċja organizzat laqgħa fraterna għall-Ahwa fil-kunvent ta' Santa Marija ta' Ġesu', Valletta. Bdiet bit-talba ta' l-Għasar, immexxija minn Mons. Charles Cordina. Kellha tkun ippreseduta minn Mons. Mario Grech li ma
ikompli f'paġna 23



ŻJARA TAL-MINISTRU ĠENERAL FIL-LIBJA

Għall-ewwel darba fl-istorja tal-missjoni tal-Libja, il-Ministru Ġeneral Jose' Rodriguez Carballo, OFM żar liż-żewġ fraternitajiet, ta' Tripli u Benghazi. Huwa stieden lil Ministru Provinċjal Paul Galea, OFM u lil Provinċjali li għandhom aħwa li qed jagħtu s-servizz hemmhekk għal-laqgħa ma' l-isqfijiet u l-missjunarji. Iżda l-Ministru Provinċjal tagħna ma marx il-Libja għaliex ma ngħatax il-visa min-naħa ta' l-Ambaxxata Libjana f'Malta. Il-Ministeru ta' l-Affarijiet Barranin Malti huwa nvolut f'dan il-każ, biex tingħata spjegazzjoni għaliex giet miżmuma l-visa.

Il-Ministru Ġeneral sejjah mill-ġdid lill-Ministri Provinċjali u l-isqfijiet għal-laqgħa ta' *follow up* li se ssir fil-Kurja Ġeneralizja, bejn il-5 u 6 ta' Novembru 2007. Ara wkoll paġni 13-19.

APOSTOLIC LETTER

SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF

It has been the constant concern of the Supreme Pontiffs, and up to the present time, to ensure that the Church of Christ offers a worthy worship to the Divine Majesty, 'to the praise and glory of His name,' and 'to the benefit of all His Holy Church.'

Since time immemorial it has been necessary - as it is also for the future - to maintain the principle according to which 'each particular Church must concur with the universal Church, not only as regards the doctrine of the faith and the sacramental signs, but also as regards the usages universally accepted by uninterrupted apostolic tradition, which must be observed not only to avoid errors but also to transmit the integrity of the faith, because the Church's law of prayer corresponds to her law of faith.' (1)

Among the pontiffs who showed that requisite concern, particularly outstanding is the name of St. Gregory the Great, who made every effort to ensure that the new peoples of Europe received both the Catholic faith and the treasures of worship and culture that had been accumulated by the Romans in preceding centuries. He commanded that the form of the sacred liturgy as celebrated in Rome (concerning both the Sacrifice of Mass and the Divine Office) be conserved. He took great concern to ensure the dissemination of monks and nuns who, following the Rule of St. Benedict, together with the announcement of the Gospel illustrated with their lives the wise provision of their Rule that 'nothing should be placed before the work of God.' In this way the sacred liturgy, celebrated according to the Roman use, enriched not only the faith and piety but also the culture of many peoples. It is known, in fact, that the Latin liturgy of the Church in its various forms, in each century of the Christian era, has been a spur to the spiritual life of many saints, has reinforced many peoples in the virtue of religion and fecundated their piety.

Many other Roman pontiffs, in the course of the centuries, showed particular solicitude in ensuring that the sacred liturgy accomplished this task more effectively. Outstanding among them is St. Pius V who, sustained by great pastoral zeal and following the exhortations of the Council of Trent, renewed the entire liturgy of the Church, oversaw the publication of liturgical books amended and 'renewed in accordance with the norms of the Fathers,' and provided them for the use of the Latin Church.

One of the liturgical books of the Roman rite is the Roman Missal, which developed in the city of Rome and, with the passing of the centuries, little by little took forms very similar to that it has had in recent times.

'It was towards this same goal that succeeding Roman Pontiffs directed their energies during the subsequent centuries in order to ensure that the rites and liturgical books were brought up to date and when necessary clarified. From the beginning of this century they undertook a more general reform.' (2) Thus our predecessors Clement VIII, Urban VIII, St. Pius X (3), Benedict XV, Pius XII and Blessed John XXIII all played a part.

In more recent times, Vatican Council II expressed a desire that the respectful reverence due to divine worship should be renewed and adapted to the needs of our time. Moved by this desire our predecessor, the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI, approved, in 1970, reformed and partly renewed liturgical books for the Latin Church. These, translated into the various languages of the world, were willingly accepted by bishops, priests and faithful. John Paul II amended the third typical edition of the Roman Missal. Thus Ro-

man pontiffs have operated to ensure that 'this kind of liturgical edifice ... should again appear resplendent for its dignity and harmony.' (4)

But in some regions, no small numbers of faithful adhered and continue to adhere with great love and affection to the earlier liturgical forms. These had so deeply marked their culture and their spirit that in 1984 the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, moved by a concern for the pastoral care of these faithful, with the special indult 'Quattuor abhinc anno,' issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship, granted permission to use the Roman Missal published by Blessed John XXIII in the year 1962. Later, in the year 1988, John Paul II with the Apostolic Letter given as *Motu Proprio*, 'Ecclesia Dei,' exhorted bishops to make generous use of this power in favor of all the faithful who so desired.

Our predecessor John Paul II having already considered the insistent petitions of these faithful, having listened to the views of the Cardinal Fathers of the Consistory of 22 March 2006, having reflected deeply upon all aspects of the question, invoked the Holy Spirit and trusting in the help of God, with these Apostolic Letters We establish the following:

Art. 1 The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is the ordinary expression of the *Lex orandi* (Law of prayer) of the Catholic Church of the Latin rite. Nonetheless, the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V and reissued by Bl. John XXIII is to be considered as an extraordinary expression of that same *Lex orandi*, and must be given due honour for its venerable and ancient usage. These two expressions of the Church's *Lex orandi* will in no any way lead to a division in the Church's *Lex credendi* (Law of belief). They are, in fact two usages of the one Roman rite.

It is, therefore, permissible to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass following the typical edition of the Roman Missal promulgated by Bl. John XXIII in 1962 and never abrogated, as an extraordinary form of the Liturgy of the Church. The conditions for the use of this Missal as laid down by earlier documents *Quattuor abhinc annis* and *Ecclesia Dei*, are substituted as follows:

Art. 2 In Masses celebrated without the people, each Catholic priest of the Latin rite, whether secular or regular, may use the Roman Missal published by Bl. Pope John XXIII in 1962, or the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970, and may do so on any day with the exception of the Easter Triduum. For such celebrations, with either one Missal or the other, the priest has no need for permission from the Apostolic See or from his Ordinary.

Art. 3 Communities of Institutes of consecrated life and of Societies of apostolic life, of either pontifical or diocesan right, wishing to celebrate Mass in accordance with the edition of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1962, for conventual or "community" celebration in their oratories, may do so. If an individual community or an entire Institute or Society wishes to undertake such celebrations often, habitually or permanently, the decision must be taken by the Superiors Major, in accordance with the law and following their own specific decrees and statutes.

Art. 4 Celebrations of Mass as mentioned above in art. 2 may – observing all the norms of law – also be attended by faithful who, of their own free will, ask to be admitted.

Art. 5 § 1 In parishes, where there is a stable group of faithful who adhere to the earlier liturgical tradition, the pastor should willingly accept their requests to celebrate the Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962, and ensure that the welfare of these faithful harmonises with the ordinary pastoral care of the parish, under the guidance of the bishop in accordance with canon 392, avoiding discord and favouring the unity of the whole Church.

§ 2 Celebration in accordance with the Missal of Bl. John XXIII may take place on working days; while on Sundays and feast days one such celebration may also be held.

§ 3 For faithful and priests who request it, the pastor should also allow celebrations in this extraordinary form for special circumstances such as marriages, funerals or occasional celebrations, e.g. pilgrimages.

§ 4 Priests who use the Missal of Bl. John XXIII must be qualified to do so [in good standing] and not juridically impeded.

§ 5 In churches that are not parish or conventual churches, it is the duty of the Rector of the church to grant the above permission.

Art. 6 In Masses celebrated in the presence of the people in accordance with the Missal of Bl. John XXIII, the readings may be given in the vernacular, using editions recognised by the Apostolic See.

Art. 7 If a group of lay faithful, as mentioned in art. 5 § 1, has not obtained satisfaction to their requests from the pastor, they should inform the diocesan bishop. The bishop is strongly requested to satisfy their wishes. If he cannot arrange for such celebration to take place, the matter should be referred to the Pontifical Commission "Ecclesia Dei".

Art. 8 A bishop who, desirous of satisfying such requests, but who for various reasons is unable to do so, may refer the problem to the Commission "Ecclesia Dei" to obtain counsel and assistance.

Art. 9 § 1 The pastor, having attentively examined all aspects, may also grant permission to use the earlier ritual for the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Marriage, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick, if the good of souls would seem to require it.

§ 2 Ordinaries are given the right to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation using the earlier Roman Pontifical, if the good of souls would seem to require it.

§ 3 Clerics ordained "in sacris constitutis" may use the Roman Breviary promulgated by Bl. John XXIII in 1962.

Art. 10 The ordinary of a particular place, if he feels it appropriate, may erect a personal parish in accordance with can. 518 for celebrations following the ancient form of the Roman rite, or appoint a chaplain, while observing all the norms of law.

Art. 11 The Pontifical Commission "Ecclesia Dei" (5), erected by John Paul II in 1988, continues to exercise its function. Said Commission will have the form, duties and norms that the Roman Pontiff wishes to assign it.

Art. 12 This Commission, apart from the powers it enjoys, will exercise the authority of the Holy See, supervising the observance and application of these dispositions.

We order that everything We have established with these Apostolic Letters issued as *Motu Proprio* be considered as "established and decreed", and to be observed from 14 September of this year, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, whatever there may be to the contrary.

From Rome, at St. Peter's, 7 July 2007, third year of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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1. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 3rd ed., 2002, no. 397.
 2. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter "Vicesimus quintus annus," 4 December 1988, 3: AAS 81 (1989), 899.
 3. Ibid.
 4. St. Pius X, Apostolic Letter *Motu proprio data*, "Abhinc duos annos," 23 October 1913: AAS 5 (1913), 449-450; cf John Paul II, Apostolic Letter "Vicesimus quintus annus," no. 3: AAS 81 (1989), 899.
 5. Cf John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Motu proprio data* "Ecclesia Dei," 2 July 1988, 6: AAS 80 (1988), 1498.

FRANCISCANS AND THE MOTU PROPRIO «SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM»

Noel Muscat, OFM

On 7th July 2007 Pope Benedict XVI published the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* data «*Summorum Pontificum*», concerning norms about the celebration of the Eucharist according to the Tridentine Rite of Pope Saint Pius V, as updated by the 1962 version of the Roman Missal, published by Blessed Pope John XXIII. Together with this Apostolic Letter, Benedict XVI also published a Letter, which he sent to all bishops, explaining the pastoral aspects of «*Summorum Pontificum*» and the use of the Roman Liturgy preceding the liturgical reform undertaken by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

The Apostolic Letter contains two parts. The first part is a brief historical outline of the progress of the Roman Rite from the times of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, right down to the Council of Trent, and to Popes Saint Pius V, Clement VIII, Urban VIII, Saint Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XII and Blessed John XXIII, all of whom updated the liturgical books, particularly the Roman Missal, especially in the period following upon the Council of Trent. This section ends with a reference to the liturgical reform of Vatican II and the first typical edition of the new Roman Missal by Paul VI in 1970, followed by two other editions by John Paul II. The second section contains the new norms regarding the use of the Roman Liturgy prior to 1970, and particularly regarding the indult given by John Paul II in the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* data «*Ecclesia Dei*» (2nd July 1988) in favour of those priests and faithful who ask bishops for permission to celebrate Mass according to the form contained in the latest edition of the Tridentine Roman Missal (1962).

The days immediately following the publication of «*Summorum Pontificum*», which will take effect as from 14th September 2007, witnessed a variety of attitudes and feedback from Christian associations and the press. They ranged from outright rejection by “progressives”, to moderate criticism by supporters of the achievements of liturgical reform after Vatican II, to euphoria and a sense of victory on the part of “traditionalist” sectors of the Catholic Church.

Article 3 of «*Summorum Pontificum*» states: “Communities of Institutes of consecrated life and of Societies of apostolic life, of either pontifical or diocesan right, wishing to celebrate Mass in accordance with the edition of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1962, for conventual or community celebration in their oratories, may do so. If an individual community or an entire Institute or Society wishes to undertake such celebrations often, habitually or permanently, the decision must be taken by the Superiors Major, in accordance with the law and following their own specific decrees and statutes.”

Given the nature of such a new legal provision, one would immediately ask whether any Franciscan fraternity which specifically opts for such a celebration, either habitually or permanently, and which would receive permission for doing so from the competent authorities (major superiors for example), could be regarded as still being in the “mainstream” of what Franciscan spiritual tradition has lived for eight centuries, regarding the celebration of the liturgy (for example, the divine office) “according to the Rite of the holy Roman Church.” Such an assertion might seem out of place, since the Roman Missal of 1962 is certainly part and parcel of venerable ecclesial liturgical tradition, which has been valid in the Church for centuries, and therefore still remains valid today. Our aim is simply that of providing food for thought if we are to delve into

what Francis meant when he commanded the friars to pray the divine offices “according to the Rite of the holy Roman Church,” and if we consider the role of the Franciscan Order in liturgical reform in the Roman rite.

Saint Francis and the liturgical reform of the Fourth Lateran Council

Francis lived during one of the great moments of reform in the Church, namely that of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and its aftermath. We can compare the Franciscan Order in that period to the Franciscan Order in these last 40 years after Vatican Council II. The Fourth Lateran Council was instrumental in reforming the liturgical and sacramental practice of the Church. Among the post-conciliar documents of Lateran IV we can quote the decree «Sane cum olim» of Pope Honorius III (22nd November 1219), regarding respect and reverence towards the Eucharist, liturgical books, vessels, altars, etc. On 3rd December 1224 Honorius III issued the decree «Quia populares tumultus», addressed specifically to the Order of Friars Minor, in which he gave them the privilege of having a portable altar in their oratories, on which to celebrate solemn Mass and the other divine offices. Francis himself wrote many a time to his brothers, to clerics and to the faithful, regarding respect and reverence to the holy Eucharist, and regarding faithfulness to the Church of Rome with respect to liturgical norms promulgated by the Fourth Lateran Council. Scholars of Franciscan liturgical tradition agree on one important point, namely, that since the time of Saint Francis, the Friars Minor were keen upon spreading among their fraternities, and subsequently in their conventual churches, the updated form of liturgical practice in the papal court, and that they tried to update their own legislation and fraternal traditions to the needs of the Church in the post Fourth Lateran Council period.

In his Chronicle, Salimbene de Adam of Parma attributes to Pope Innocent III the revision of the ecclesiastical divine office during the Fourth Lateran Council. This revised office soon became popular with the Friars Minor, who according to the witness of Matthew of Paris, carried their liturgical books in their haversacks during their missionary journeys of preaching.

The general chapter of Pentecost of 1230 decreed that all the provinces of the Order should receive the breviaries and antiphonaries proper to the Order. The chronicles of Jordan of Giano and Thomas of Eccleston both speak about the practice of the friars to go to the cathedral and parish churches to sing the divine office, since they still did not have their own oratories.

In the years 1240-1244 the minister general Haymo of Faversham undertook a thorough revision of the liturgical books of the Order. The first liturgical books in the Order had been published during the pontificate of Gregory IX. They included the breviary and missal, together with the rubrics and calendar. These liturgical books had the aim of spreading the Roman rite. The insistence of the Rule upon liturgical faithfulness to the liturgy of the papal court is evident in the fact that scholars speak about the “Regula breviary”, the “Regula missal” and the “Regula ritual”.

The spreading of the Roman liturgy by the Franciscans was so effective, that the breviary they used became to be called the “Roman-Franciscan” breviary. Pope Nicholas III (1277-1286) decreed that in the churches of Rome the old antiphonaries, gradu-als, missals and other liturgical books of the divine office were to be replaced by the liturgical books and breviaries in use in the Franciscan Order. The popularity of the liturgical reform after Lateran IV was such that, wherever the Franciscans settled down, including the university cities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna and Padova, they brought with them the revised Roman liturgy, particularly through the spreading of the “Breviarium Curiae”. This trend continued right down to the Council of Trent and the papacy of Saint Pius V, who unified the liturgy of the western Church by providing it with the Roman model which, with periodic modifications, remained in use until the latest liturgical reform, that of Vatican Council II.

Franciscans and the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council

The brief historical outline regarding the liturgical reforms introduced by the Fourth Lateran Council and the role of the Franciscan Order in spreading them, tells us one important fact, namely, that the Friars Minor were instrumental in promoting Church reform and that the Franciscan liturgical tradition has always progressed along the same lines indicated by the Church of Rome. The great Franciscan preachers of the Observant family in the fifteenth century are a proof of the beneficial use of the vernacular in popular preaching, just as the first Franciscan missionaries to the Far East and to the Americas were innovators in translating the Bible and other liturgical books into the native languages of the peoples they evangelised.

At this point of history we are faced with an option regarding the Roman liturgical tradition. «*Summorum pontificum*» states this plainly in Article 1: “The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is the ordinary expression of the ‘Lex orandi’ of the Catholic Church of the Latin rite. Nonetheless, the Roman Missal promulgated by Saint Pius V and reissued by Blessed John XXIII is to be considered as an extraordinary expression of that same ‘Lex orandi’, and must be given due honour for its venerable and ancient usage. These two expressions of the Church’s ‘Lex orandi’ will in no way lead to a division of the Church’s ‘Lex credendi’. They are, in fact, two usages of the one Roman rite.”

It is up to theologians to discuss whether there is, in fact, the one and same ‘Lex credendi’ in the Missal of Saint Pius V and that of Paul VI, given that the liturgical tradition prior to Vatican II, in some aspects, certainly expresses a different ecclesiology than that which developed after Vatican II regarding the celebration of the Eucharist. The aim of these reflections is that of asking ourselves if, as Franciscans, we are, in fact, free to decide personally and on a fraternal basis, whether we can opt for one or another of the liturgical forms being presented. The question of these forms being “ordinary” and “extraordinary” is not a question of substantial difference, given that the same ‘*Motu proprio*’ states, in Article 2: “For such celebrations, with either one Missal or the other, the priest has no need for permission from the Apostolic See or from his Ordinary.”

One of the problems in accepting this provision without any sense of discernment in the case of us Franciscans is linked with a correct understanding of the ordained ministry in the fraternity. The Missal of Honorius III, which the friars used in the 13th century, had a rubric, which stated: “If there are more priests in the same place, they can individually sing the Mass they want.” It is important to confront these words with what Francis himself states in the Letter to the Entire Order:

“I admonish and exhort you in the Lord, therefore, to celebrate only one Mass a day according to the rite of the Holy Church in those places where the brothers dwell. But if there is more than one priest there, let the other be content, for the love of charity, at hearing the celebration of the other priest.”

In a time when there was no possibility of concelebrating the Eucharist, Francis prefers the primacy of charity in the fraternity above the personal choices of the priest in exercising his right to celebrate Mass. With the possibility of concelebration during “conventual” Mass, given to all religious communities after Vatican II, the question of the convenience of celebrating “private” Masses, at least in the Franciscan family, remains open to debate, just as the question of “concelebration” is still an object of debate in some sectors of the Church.

We shall not deal, at this point, with the pastoral aspects of one or the other kind of celebration, even though this is also a point of discussion, given that the Church has entrusted many parishes to the pastoral care of the Franciscan Order. This discussion would entail an examination of the role of the parish priest in relation to the local Ordinary, whose authority in decision making regarding the use or otherwise of the Tridentine Mass seems to have been curtailed in «*Summorum pontificum*», article 7. With all due “obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope”, we cannot accept the provisions of «*Summorum pontificum*» without some sense of preoccupation not only

regarding its long-term effects on Church unity and pastoral ministry, but more so regarding its implications for us, as Franciscans. In our long history, we have hardly been an example of unity or uniformity. Nevertheless, the Franciscan family has always been a dynamic force in the Church. It has understood its faithfulness to the Church of Rome as implying a sincere effort to move on with the Church, to open up new spaces in which the Spirit of the Lord can operate. In this endeavour, ever faithful to Catholic tradition, and rejecting all kinds of innovations not based on sound Catholic doctrine, every Franciscan feels that it is his duty to move on. The Second Vatican Council has provided such an opportunity, which still needs to be studied in depth and valued for the future of the Church. Among the new fruits of the Spirit born out of Vatican II, the revised edition of the Roman Missal has certainly been a great success. The words of Pope Paul VI remain prophetic for us, Franciscan priests, if we have to discern whether we can, in fact, remain faithful to our tradition by making use of the privileges granted by «*Summorum pontificum*»:

“We hope nevertheless that the Missal will be received by the faithful as an instrument which bears witness to and which affirms the common unity of all. Thus, in the great diversity of languages, one unique prayer will rise as an acceptable offering to our Father in heaven, through our High-Priest Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.”

NOTES

1. The original Latin version I shall quote is that found in the official web-site of the Vatican: <http://www.vatican.va>

2. The English translation of the Letter will be quoted also from the official web-site of the Vatican.

3. BENEDICTUS XVI, *Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae Summorum Pontificum*, Art. 3: “Si communitates Institutorum vitae consecratae atque Societatum vitae apostolicae iuris sive pontificii sive dioecesiani quae in celebratione conventuali seu “communitatis” in oratoriis propriis celebrationem sanctae Missae iuxta editionem Missalis Romani anno 1962 promulgatam habere cupiunt, id eis licet. Si singula communitas aut totum Institutum vel Societas tales celebrations saepe vel plerumque vel permanentiter perficere vult, res a Superioribus maioribus ad normam iuris et secundum leges et statuta particularia decernatur.”

4. *Later Rule*, 3,1, *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*, Vol. I, ed. R.J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, W.J. Short, Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY 1999 [= FAED I], 101.

5. BENEDICT XVI, *Letter to the Bishops on the occasion of the publication of the Apostolic Letter “Motu Proprio data” «Summorum Pontificum» on the use of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reform of 1970*: “In the first place, there is the fear that the document detracts from the authority of the Second Vatican Council, one of whose essential decisions – the liturgical reform – is being called into question. This fear is unfounded. In this regard, it must first be said that the Missal published by Paul VI and then republished in two subsequent editions by John Paul II, obviously is and continues to be the normal Form – the *Forma ordinaria* – of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council, which was published with the authority of Pope John XXIII in 1962 and used during the Council, will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were ‘two Rites’. Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.”

6. *Reg. Bullata* (1223), 3,1: “Clerici faciant divinum officium secundum ordinem sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae”. The Cistercian chronicler Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, in his *Chronicle* (1227-1235) writes: “Regarding the usage (of the friars minor) in reading Scripture and singing psalms, he (Francis) chose the form of the Church of Rome” (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, 13,887-888). HONORIUS III, Decree *Sane cum olim* (22 November 1219), in *Bullarium Romanum*, Honorius III, n. XI, tom. III, 366a-366b: “We strictly enjoin by precept that the Eucharist be reserved always devotedly and faithfully in a place of honour that is clean and designated for It alone. Every priest should teach his people frequently that they should bow in reverence whenever the life-giving Host is elevated at the celebration of Mass and that each one should do the same when the priest is carrying It to the sick. At the same time, the priest should carry It in becoming apparel covered with a clean veil and should bring It back opening at his breast and with respect. The priest should be preceded by a torch, since the Eucharist is the radiance of Eternal Light” (translation taken from FAED I, 55).

7. HONORIUS III, Decree *Quia populares tumultus* (3 December 1224), in *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 20,

- n. 17: "Therefore, favourable to your petitions, by authority of these present letters, we concede to you this privilege: that in your places and oratories you may celebrate solemn Masses with a portable altar, as well as the other divine offices, without prejudice to the rights of parochial churches" (translation taken from FAED I, 562). S.J.P. VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinal by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243-1307)*, Vol. I, Leiden 1963, 40-41: "The third chapter of the final Rule (1223) prescribes that, except for the psalter, clerics are to say the Divine Office according to the use of the Holy Roman Church, since they are allowed to have breviaries. Lay brothers are to say a number of Our Fathers for each of the Canonical Hours. Since at the time the brotherhood of St. Francis was predominantly an Order of laymen and clerics, the Rule limited itself to the obligation of the Office and its equivalent without reference to the Mass liturgy. The increasing number of priests soon made itself felt; by 1230 it was already so great that the first issue of liturgical books included both an Office and a Mass book."
8. "The phrase 'according to the use of the Holy Roman Church' is vague in itself. The liturgical books published afterwards show how the Office intended was that of the pope's court, officially residing at the Lateran palace. In the last years of the reign of Innocent III this office was codified in an ordinal, the arrangement and rubrics of which were followed not only in the liturgical books of the papal chaplains but also in those reviewed by Honorius III in order to release this liturgy to a wider use. In fact, the breviary was adopted by the canons of the cathedral of Assisi, from whom St. Francis inherited his veneration for the court liturgy. The papal chaplains, however, used the so-called Roman Psalter. The exception made on this point by the Rule indicates that the friars were to say the court Office but not the Roman version of its Psalter. They conformed to the tradition observed outside Rome by saying the Gallican Psalter."
9. Cfr. N. MUSCAT, "*Brothers, look at the humility of God*". *The Eucharist in the Writings and the Life of Saint Francis of Assisi*, Franciscan Studies Corner, web-site of the Maltese Franciscan OFM Province: www.ofm.org.mt
10. *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, ed. J.L. Baird, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, Vol. 40, New York 1986, 4.
12. "Libros continue suos, videlicet bibliotecas, in forulis a cullo dependentes baiulantes." Quotation taken from GRATIEN DE PARIS, *Historie de la Fondation et de l'Évolution de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs au XIIIe siècle*, Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina, Roma 1982, 63-64, footnote.
13. *Thirteenth Century Chronicles. Jordan of Giano, Thomas of Eccleston, Salimbene degli Adami*, Translated from the Latin by P. Hermann, Introduction and Notes by M.T. Laureilhe, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 61: "In the same general chapter breviaries and antiphonaries according to the usage of the Order were sent to the provinces."
14. S.J.P. VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinal of Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243-1307)*, Vol. I, Leiden 1963, 40-55.
15. BENEDICTUS XVI, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae *Summorum Pontificum*, Art. 1: "Missale Romanum a Paulo VI promulgatum ordinaria expressio 'Legis orandi' Ecclesiae catholicae ritus latini est. Missale autem Romanum a S. Pio V promulgatum et a B. Ioanne XXIII denuo editum habeatur uti extraordinaria expressio eiusdem 'Legis orandi' Ecclesiae et ob venerabilem et antiquum eius usum debito gaudeat honore. Haec duae expressiones 'legis orandi' Ecclesiae, minime vero inducent in divisionem 'legis credendi' Ecclesiae; sunt enim duo usus unici ritus romani."
16. BENEDICTUS XVI, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae *Summorum Pontificum*, Art. 2: "Ad talem celebrationem secundum unum alterumve Missale, sacerdos nulla eget licentia, nec Sedis Apostolicae nec Ordinarii sui."
17. "Sed si sunt plures sacerdotes in hoc loco, secrete possunt cantare missam quam volunt."
18. *EpOrd* 30-31: "Si vero in loco plures fuerint sacerdotes, sit per amorem caritatis alter contentus audita celebratione alterius sacerdotis."
19. BENEDICTUS XVI, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae *Summorum Pontificum*, Art. 7: "Ubi aliquis coetus fidelium laicorum, de quo in art. 5 §1 petita a parrocho non obtinuerit, de re certiore faciat Episcopum dioecesanum. Episcopus enixe rogatur ut eorum optatum exaudiat. Si ille ad huiusmodi celebrationem providere non potest res ad Pontificiam Commissionem 'Ecclesia Dei' referatur."
20. PAUL VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (3 April 1969), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 61 (1969) 217-226: "Haud secus Nos, etsi, de praescripto Concilii Vaticani II, in novum Missale legitimas varietates et aptationes (Cf CONCILIIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, Const. de sacra liturgia *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 38-40; AAS 56, 1964, p. 110) ascivimus, nihilo tamen secius fore confidimus, ut hoc ipsum a christifidelibus quasi subsidium ad mutuam omnium unitatem testandam confirmandamque accipiat, utpote cuius ope, in tot varietate linguarum, una eademque cunctorum precatio ad caelestem Patrem, per summum Pontificem nostrum Iesum Christum, in Spiritu Sancto, quovis ture fragrantior ascendat."

Communication of the General Definitory - September 2007

The “tempo forte” of September was held from the 3rd to 13th of the month. The following specific topics were dealt with in addition to the usual ones:

- a. The profile of the Friar Minor and of the Order in the future;
- b. The role of the General Definitory;
- c. The formative Aid on chapter IV of the GGCC prepared by the JPIC Office in collaboration with the other Offices of the General Curia: “Pilgrims and strangers in this world” (1Pt 2,11; Rb 6,2);
- d. The Aid prepared by the Commission for Contemplation: The page for the prayerful reading of the Word of God in fraternity on the topic of “restitution”: With the heart and mind turned to God – in order to allow ourselves to be nourished and vivified by the Holy Gospel and to restore all to the Most High;
- e. The present reality of and future prospects for the presence of the Order on the African continent (A series of reflections on the reality of each continent, initiated with this one, will continue during the coming sessions);
- f. The Ritual for the feasts of Saints of the OFM (for which the documentation “Variationes propositae anno 2007 in Calendario Generali OFM 2001 approbato inserendae”, and the reasons for the “addictiones et variationes” to the Universal Calendar of the Order of Friars Minor, were consulted) and the Formula of Profession (a proposal for a revision of which was examined in the light of the first chapter of the Rule) were discussed. This proposal will be presented to the Conference of the 4 Ministers General of the Franciscan Family by our Minister;
- g. The China Project;
- h. Foundations dependent on the Minister General.

1. Sharing:

The Friars of the Definitory shared their various visits to, meetings and celebrations with the different Entities since the last “tempo forte”. Time was given to an exchange about the Franciscan Youth March and the Meeting of European Youth; both initiatives were realised in Assisi. The Minister General informed the Definitory that two Novices of the “Russia-Kazakhstan” Foundation were professed this year, and the Elective Chapter will be held in Assisi during the early months of next year.

2. Reports:

The reports sent in by the General Visitators, who have finished their service in the following Entities: “Incarnate Word Province in West Africa; The Provinces of Saxony and St. Elizabeth in Germany; The Province of St. Salvador de Horta in Spain; the Provinces of Abruzzo, Benevento and Calabria in Italy; the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Gorcom in Holland; the CISA and the General Curia, were studied and evaluated.

3. Appointment of Visitators:

The following have been appointed Visitators: Br. Aidan McGrath, of the Province of Ireland, for the “Queen of Peace” Province in South Africa; Br. Phillip Miscalmbale, of the “Holy Spirit” Province in Australia and New Zealand, for the Autonomous Custody of “St. Francis of Assisi” in Papua New Guinea.

4. Meetings:

The dates for the next meetings were established:

- Visitators – from 12th to 16th November 2007;
- newly elected Ministers and Custodes - from 14th to 22nd January 2008;
- Presidents of Conferences – from 12th to 14th May 2008.

The programme for the meeting with the Visitors was prepared, presented and confirmed. The Definitory asks the Visitors to bring the Particular Statutes of the Entity to be visited with them.

With regard to the meeting of the newly elected Ministers and Custodes, there was a discussion on the possibility of inviting the Custodes of the dependent Custodies also. It was decided to accept any possible requests of that kind from the Ministers Provincial on whom the Custodies depend, given that this meeting was meant, from the beginning, to be for the Ministers and Custodes of Autonomous Custodies.

It was also decided to advance the "tempo forte" of July 2008 to 1st - 12th because of the World Youth Day in Sydney (from 15th to 20th July 2008) in which the Minister General, together with the Definitory for the region, will participate. The Minister will also visit the Province of Australia on that occasion.

5. General Chapter 2009:

The Definitory took concrete decisions about the date, place and background theme for the next General Chapter on the basis of the proposals received from some Conferences and which will be enriched by what emerges from meetings with the rest of the Conferences. The process of requesting proposals for the revision of the General Statutes has been set in motion. These should be returned to the General Secretariat by the month of May 2008. The Minister General will address a letter to the Ministers and Custodes on this.

6. New Province in Austria-Italy.

The Definitory decided during this session on the erection of the new Province in Austria, effective from the 21st October next. The Definitory elected the Minister Provincial and Definitory of the new Province, which will be proclaimed on the day of the erection in the presence of the Minister General, accompanied by the Definitory for the region.

7. Poor Clare Sisters:

The Minister General informed the Definitory of a serious fire at the Monas-

tery of "San Cosimato" in Rome – the community goes back to the times of St. Clare – caused by a short circuit. Some of the elderly Sisters have been accommodated temporarily by other Monasteries and in the Infirmary of the Roman Province.

8. Meetings with the Offices.

Following custom, the Definitory met the General Postulation and the Legal Office to be informed about the work being done and the future prospects. The news that a Poor Clare Sister, Sr. M. Celina of the Presentation (1878-1897), would be beatified in the Cathedral of Bordeaux, in France, on the 16th of September, was received with joy. Two groups of Friars Minor, martyred in 1936 and belonging to the Provinces of Madrid and Granada, in Spain, will be declared Blessed on the 28th October next. The Definitory expressed its appreciation for the work done in these Offices.

9. Finances.

The Bursar General informed the Definitory about the progress of the work on the four building sites open at the moment: St. Isidore's, the Guest House for the Latern University at the CISA, the Auditorium in the Pontifical University Antonianum, the Guest House at Gelsomino. The Bursar then presented some proposals for the future use of the property at Grottaferrata after the transfer of St. Bonaventure's College to St. Isidore's in Rome.

Different financial requests from various Entities of the Order were also examined.

10. Administrative cases.

About 80 files regarding the issue of decree, ratifications and dispensations were examined.

11. Various.

The Definitory dedicated a certain time to examining the situation of the Houses which some Entities leave and which are taken over by others. The matter falls under art. 123 §2 of the GGSS: It is necessary to be clear that when a Province takes over a House relinquished by another, it must ask and obtain the con-

sent of the respective Definitories and of the General Definitory. In addition, it is necessary to draw up a previous agreement in which the modes of collaboration, of exchange and of fraternal life on various levels with the Province in whose territory the House exists, are laid down. This agreement must be sent to the General Curia together with the request for the erection of the House.

The Definitory fixed the agenda of coming meetings in which it will be present, in full or in part:

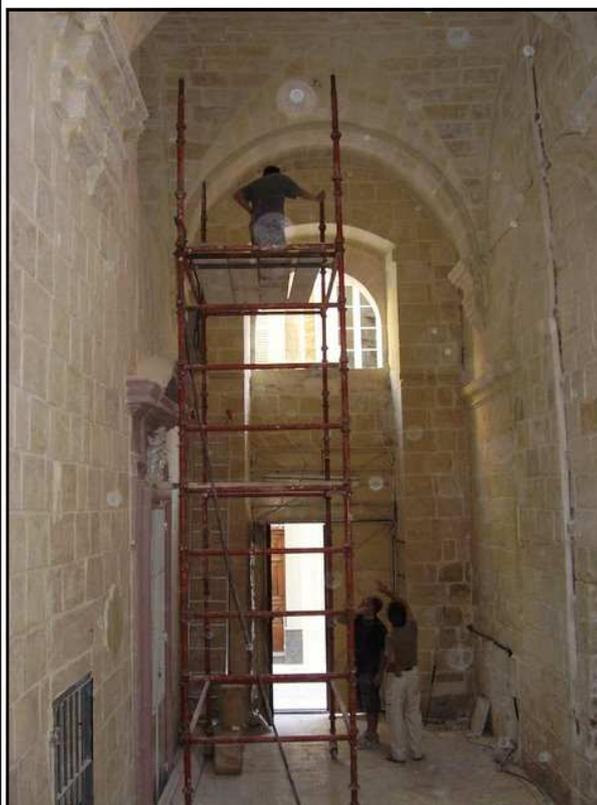
- 17.09. 2007: in La Verna;
- 18-21. 09: Study Seminar on "Franciscans among Muslims today" in the General Curia;
- 1.10. 07: Aracoeli in Roma - for the commemoration of the anniversary of the Beatification of Bl. Mary of the Passion;
- 9-14. 10: Sarajevo, meeting of UFME;
- 15-20. 10: European Meeting of JPIC in Frankfurt (Germany);
- 19. 10: The Inauguration of the Academic Year at the P.U.A.;
- 20. 10: Assembly in Morocco;
- 21. 10: The erection of the "St. Leopold" Province in Austria;
- 13-28. 10: International Congress for Moderators of Ongoing Formation: the programme provides for a meeting with the respective Definitors for the regions on the 27th and a vigil for the opening of the third year of preparation for the celebration of the VIII Centenary;
- 28. 10: The Beatification of the Martyrs of the OFM in Spain;
- 1- 3. 11: 1st European Congress of Franciscan Educators in Cordoba (Spain);
- 3. 11: Meeting with all the Sisters of a Franciscan inspiration in Aracoeli;
- 8. 11: Academic Act in honour of Bl. John Duns Scotus at the P.U.A.;
- 26. 11: Concert based on the Fioretti, in Pesaro.

The next "tempo forte" will be held from the 5th to the 16th November and the final one of the year 2007 from the 17th to the 21st of December.

Xogħol ta' manutensjoni fil-Kunvent tal-Belt



Qed isir xogħol ta' restawr fuq il-pjan t'isfel tal-Kunvent ta' Ġiezu, il-Belt. L-ewwel ġie mneħhi l-ġir u żebgħa li kien għatta l-ħitan, imbagħad sar xogħol ta' restawr fuq il-ġebbla, u issa qed jitwahnhal id-dawl f'sistema ġdida u kreattiva. Ix-xogħol tadawl qed isir kollu mill-Mastru Joseph Magro, OFM u l-istudenti Walter Vassallo, OFM u Joseph Ciappara, OFM u aħwa oħra. Xi wħud niżlu biex jammiraw u jieħdu r-ritratti li qed taraw!



THE MISSION AMONG THE MUSLIMS - A dialogue of life

Historical Background

Jose' Rodriguez Carballo, OFM - Minister General

1. The call to the Crusades

The holy places had fallen into the hands of the Muslims. This was considered to be an ignominious affront to the Christian world. The Popes, first Urban II and then Eugene III, asked the Christian people to liberate them by convoking the first Crusades.

Christians and Muslims fought in a "holy war". The Christians had to respond to Muslim aggression with war, the IV Latern Council declared. Both Christians and Muslims thought they were defending the honour of God. On the Christian side it was a question of honour and justice to tear the places of our redemption from the hands of the Muslims, considered to be "robbers" of the land of the Lord. For the Muslims, that land belonged to them, it had been given to them by Allah from the beginning of Islam. Besides, Mahomad had "ascended" to heaven from mount Moria, in Jerusalem.

The vocabulary used, in this context, by the preachers of the Crusades was significant in the reigning bellicose climate: "The sons of Agar, Abraham's slave", "A people enslaved by devils", "Worms from whom it is necessary to liberate the Holy Land". The

image of the beast, described by Daniel (7, 20-24) and in the Book of Revelations (12, 3), was applied to them. Mahomad, Innocent III would write, was the "son of perdition", "the Beast", whose death, the Pope announced, was imminent. In this context, whoever killed a Muslim, St. Bernard would affirm, was not a killer of men, but a "killer of evil" and would be considered as one who had avenged the insult to the Lord. Things were certainly no better on the side of the Muslims, although we do not have any literature on it. The one certain thing is that both the one and the other were fighting, in the name of "their God", for a land which, according to them, belonged to them exclusively.

2. The guns fell silent and hearts were opened

In this climate, a man, whose name Francis was a blessing, was born and reared (LgMj 1, 1). Called by the Lord to repair His Church, the Poverello had to break down many walls and cross many barriers, especially the walls and barriers which opposed people to each other: minors and majors, educated and "idiots", Christians and Muslims...

Francis joined the V

Crusade, probably in Ancona. Finally, after failing in 1211, the son of Bernardone would see his dream of getting to the kingdom of the Saracens realised. The battle of Damietta began on the 29th of May 1218.

Francis, with a group of "pilgrims" of the V Crusade – this was the name given to the combatants -, arrived at the battle field in July 1219. The Christian army suffered a serious defeat on the 29th of August (cf. 2Cel 30). Francis had predicted it and had declared himself against the war, but he was not listened to. Faced by his failure in the Crusaders' camp, Francis, feeling he was sent by God, as he himself would say before the Sultan, did not hesitate to present himself before Al-Malik al Kamil, who received him with great sympathy. We do not know the content of the conversation between the two protagonists of this meeting. What we do know is that Francis would present himself openly as a Christian, he went to the essential, and the Sultan accepted that.

The Sultan discovered a man of faith in Francis. Francis, in turn, discovered a "believer" in the Sultan, a man who prayed five times a day, and was not a "son of the devil". The miracle of

he encounter came about. The guns fell silent and dialogue began between these men, separated by religion and culture but united in faith. It is very significant that they both understood and respected each other, even though they spoke different languages. It was faith in the "clement and merciful God", that united them, though their religion was separating them. Francis would return from the "enemy" camp as he had arrived: without any riches, for he rejected them, but with a heart more open than ever to the "other", before whom he did not hesitate to confess his faith in the triune God.

3. Crossing barriers, jumping walls

On meeting Melek-el-Kamil, Francis destroyed the wall of Christianity. He did not reason with the ideological criteria of the Christianity of that time, but placed himself beyond the frontier of the Crusade. His proposal was "to go beyond", to leave his own "side" to get to the "side" of the other. When Francis arrived at the "house" of the Sultan, he didn't present himself as one "sent" by the Crusaders, but by God, as a messenger of the one God in whom the Sultan also believed. In this way Francis immediately placed himself within the sensitivities of the other.

Francis also overcame the wall of fear. Francis didn't fear force (the army), or power (of the Sultan or of the Cardinal Legate, Pelagio), or the "incognitus" or the difference present in the other. Francis had already

overcome, in his life, fear of the other, the sick and repugnant, by embracing the leper. He had overcome the division between the good and the bad, welcoming the robbers and offering them fraternity and acceptance, and by inviting them to a change of life. He had overcome the barrier between those who have power and those who suffer oppression. The episode of the wolf at Gubbio is a clear exposition of that. In Damietta, Francis overcame every fear, crossed every frontier and reached the "side" of the other.

Francis, in a definitive way, aimed at the construction of a new world based on a programme of universal fraternity. In Francis, everything began with the discovery he made of God in his youth. From then on he didn't hesitate to "jump" all the barriers he would encounter on his journey towards the other: the barrier of his ego in order to embrace the physical leper; the social barrier to embrace the robbers or "moral lepers", the ecclesiastical barrier to embrace the spiritual leper, which was the Muslim.

Francis was a pilgrim, a "mendicant" in search of the unknown brother. He was a mendicant of God and of men.

4. The keys to the "dialogue" of Francis with the Sultan

The episode to which we have just referred presents Francis, the universal brother, as a man profoundly convinced of the need to pass through the doorway of the other which

holds us back, without any prejudices or other pretensions, except those of the gratuitous meeting and respectful and frank discussion.

It is significant that, while his contemporaries, including the Popes, invited people to go against the Muslims and granted indulgences to those who fought to liberate the holy places of our redemption, Francis asked his Friars to go among them (1R 16, 3; 2R 12, 1). This is a great difference. Francis was going against the current. The God in which Francis believed profoundly is the God of love of St. John (cf. 1Jn 4, 8). He therefore asked his Friars who, by divine inspiration wished to go among the Saracens and other non-believers, to go to give witness to the God of love, the Father of Jesus Christ and of us all.

At Damietta, each one affirmed his identity, the diversity was respected and interaction was lived, all the keys necessary for meeting and dialoguing with others.

5. The Franciscans on meeting the other

We Friars Minor received a great inheritance from Francis: to go among the Saracens and other unbelievers. Our Order is missionary, the first missionary Order in the Church. For the first time in the history of the religious life the apostolic vocation among the unbelievers was established as normal. The mission of the Order is open and universal. The missionary vocation of the Friars Minor came to be the ultimate expression of the Gospel lived

catholically. The fact that the Approved Rule concludes with the chapter dedicated to this mission among the Saracens and other unbelievers is highly significant, almost saying to us: the mission is the high point of the gospel vocation of the Friar Minor.

From the beginning, the franciscan fraternity perceived itself as being in a state of mission, itinerant, open to all mankind, which meant that the Friars “very quickly spread throughout the world”, as St. Bonaventure stated, comparing the epic period of the Order to the early history of the Church (cf. LMj 4, 7). Faithful to this vocation, today, despite the scarcity of vocations in some regions from which the greatest number of missionaries used to come, and even when the whole world could be considered to be “a missionary country”, the Order, however, cannot renounce this duty to go among the Muslims, no matter how difficult it may be or seem. Having become aware that the mission is the key to understanding and giving new vigour to our life, aware that the mission is the dimension which unifies the other aspects and values of the franciscan life, we feel the need to overcome our temptations and egocentric tendencies and to renew our presence among the Muslims. This presence forms part of our charism. Our Order is present, at the moment, in various countries that are officially Muslim or where there is a big Muslim representation: Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Djibouti, Togo, Burkina Faso,

the Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau (in Africa), Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria (in the Middle East), Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines (in Asia), Bosnia, Albania (in Europe), Kazakhstan and Turkey.

I thank the Friars for their work and mission among Muslims, in the majority of cases in situations that are by no means easy. The Order appreciates their work and gives thanks for what they are, “beacons of hope” and “a generous offering of faith and communion” among the Muslims also (cf. The Lord speaks with us on the road, 37), in the majority of cases through their “simple presence and perseverance in areas of the world where difficulties [in many cases] have reached truly extreme levels” (cf. The Lord speaks with us on the road, 37). Persevere, dear brothers, in this way of dialogue, of meeting the “other”, the “different”, of crossing borders, as Francis did, on the basis of the desire to create a real fraternity which springs from recognising that we are all children of the same Father (cf. The Lord speaks with us on the road, 36).

How can we carry out this mission?

6. Setting out from the Rule

The Rules, approved and unapproved, give us important principles to keep in mind in both the mission in general and in the specific mission among the Saracens and other unbelievers. Let us look at the more important ones.

The necessity for discernment

Not all, according to the Rule, are called to go among the Muslims. This is a vocation within the franciscan vocation: “Let whoever of the friars who by divine inspiration wants to go among the saracens and other infidels seek permission for that reason from their minister provincial. Indeed the ministers are to grant permission to go to none, except those who seem fit to be sent” (2R 12, 1-2).

It is significant that to go among the Saracens and other unbelievers is the same expression used for entering the Order: by divine inspiration (1R 2, 1). This requirement, which disappeared in the text of the Approved Rule when embracing this kind of life (cf. 2R 2, 1), is, however, introduced in the Rule when going among the Saracens and other unbelievers is spoken about (cf. 2R 12, 1).

Personally, my attention is drawn to the insistence that is put, in both the 1R 16 and the 2R 12, on the need to discern the will of those who wish to go among the Saracens and other unbelievers. “Can there be so many deceptions!”, the present-day commentator on the Rule, Javier Garrido, wonders and then replies: “the most dangerous of them all is that which comes from the best of desires, that of heroism” (La forma de vida franciscana ayer y hoy, 219). The missionary is not a hero. He is a man who responds to the call of the Spirit, the real protagonist

of the mission in its beginning as well as in its development. One does not go on mission or choose the mission on the basis of a personal project. The mission is a particular vocation which comes from God, inspired by God, and which requires, on the part of the person called, a generous response.

However, besides this temptation, which is certainly real, Francis puts us on guard against another, no less real, which refers to the ministers. They have to discern the suitability of the Friar in total freedom and with a great spirit of generosity. This is because, if the discernment has necessarily to pass through the ministers, they must be very attentive to not give permission to those unsuited, or deny those who, before God, they consider to be suitable to go among the saracens and other unbelievers, because they will have to give an account to the Lord (cf. 1R 16, 4).

This is a clear call for attention: to those who wish to free themselves easily of some Friars, or to those who, considering themselves masters, wish to hold them back, against divine inspiration, to “cover other needs” considered to be “more urgent”. I consider it important, in this sense, to note a change of accent between the first Rule and the second Rule. While it is insisted, in the first, that the ministers must not deny permission to those they consider called to this kind of mission; in the second it is insisted that permission should not be given too lightly: “Indeed the min-

isters are to grant permission to go to none, except those who seem fit to be sent” (2R 12, 2). What does this change insinuate? In my opinion, something was happening in the fraternity. Francis called all to be very realistic and serene in discernment. In the area of vocation no one is “lord” either of himself, or of another. One and the other are at the service of what the Spirit “inspires”. Fraternal obedience and the primacy of the initiatives of God must function at the same time.

We now have to add to what was said above, that one does not go on mission, or choose the mission in function of “needs”. One does not go because a Province has enough Friars to cover the needs, but also one does not go because “more urgent needs have to be covered”, as is sometimes heard. Nor is the mission chosen because of its needs. One goes on mission because he feels called and this call is confirmed by whoever has the responsibility –the serious responsibility- of making the final discernment. It is not the need that determines the going on mission or not, or the selection of this or that mission, although the Lord also speaks through the said needs. The determining factor is always the call of the Lord.

The missionary method.

The general principle for the Friars on mission is that which Francis gave to all the Friars who go through the world: “I counsel, warn and exhort my Friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about

through the world, they are not to quarrel nor contend in words, nor are they to judge others, but they are to be meek, peaceable and modest, meek and humble, speaking uprightly to all, as is fitting” (2R 3, 10).

The solemn tone and the personal nature of this exhortation, the second of the Rule, lets us understand that we are before one of the core values of the very form of franciscan life. The Friars, in a permanent state of being on mission, have to live a life configured by the Beatitudes of Jesus by constantly developing the ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2Cor 5; Ef 2) through the love which supports and awaits without limits, that is, following the footprints of Jesus, who took on our sins (cf. Adm 5, 15). The franciscan mission, whatever its practical manifestation may be, has to be inspired by the dynamics of the Beatitudes.

Our mission, for Francis, is not that of avenging anything, but that of “doing penance” and of being lesser (cf. 2R 9; Test 7-8). Minority and the ministry of reconciliation are dimensions of the same mission for Francis. According to the biographers, Francis was a prophet of peace (cf. 1Cel 23; 36; 42; 101) and a man of reconciliation (cf. LP 75; 108). We can see, between the lines, the methodology used by Francis on this mission: non-violence, hoping against hope in the efficacy of active and powerful love, and the undefended love which trusts in the human heart, despite appearances. He commended it to the Order as

an essential task (cf. LP 84). All this indicates that minority is a determining attitude of our going about the world and also among the Saracens and other unbelievers.

The franciscan missionary method is, therefore, inseparable from minority, from the attitude of service and of dialogue, subject to all human creatures for God (cf. 1R 16, 7). This means that priority must be given to the person of the other, without prejudices, and that man is sought by considering, above all, the other to be a brother or sister. The franciscan missionary is called to place himself in evangelical relationship with the other, becoming a source of welcome, of listening, and developing feelings of sympathy and courtesy. The franciscan missionary is called to accept and respect the other, at every moment, to live solidarity to the ultimate consequences, to walk with the other. The person has to count for more than the culture and even the religious creed for a franciscan missionary (cf. Vincenzo Brocanelli, *Living-in-mission according to the franciscan charism*, Rome 2006, 66ff).

The arms proposed for the mission by Francis, in contrast to the arms of the Crusaders, are gentleness and simplicity, without forgetting, certainly, prudence (cf. 1R 16, 1). The Friars are called on to set out on mission, especially, among the Saracens and unbelievers, as men free of any ideology and not depending in any way on human powers, but only on the Lord who sends

them. His only strength is the power of the Word of the Lord and the power of God, which is manifested in the weakness of men. Life first of all

The vocation of the Friar Minor is to follow and show Christ to others. This means that every Friar Minor, and the franciscan missionary in particular, should give primacy to gospel life above pastoral ministry. He does not proselytise, he doesn't "conquer", he gives witness; he doesn't demonstrate, but rather shows, makes Him who is, for him, all good, supreme good, richness to satisfaction (cf. PrsG) visible. The franciscan missionary has to keep in mind that what was really attractive in Francis was not his eloquence, but the fact that he was a man of God. The franciscan missionary, like Francis, is a man who, with "nothing of his own", radically poor, feels he is rich in giving witness to Him who is everything to him.

The missionary among the Saracens and other unbelievers does not refuse to preach the Gospel in any circumstances, but he does so first of all through his life and only when it seems opportune (once again, discernment) by preaching it explicitly. Isn't the contrast between the franciscan missionary method and that of the Crusades of yesteryear and of today very evident? This method is fully up-to-date. The Extraordinary General Chapter affirmed it: Nothing can substitute for life (cf. The Lord spoke with us on the road, 10). Life has absolute primacy in the everyday of the authentic

missionary. From this is deduced an absolute primacy for all those who announce the Gospel, especially among the Muslims: giving quality to one's life as a Friar Minor, keeping in mind the Priorities of the Order, in which the style of franciscan life is summarised and updated (cf. GGCC 1, 2).

In summary, the franciscan missionary method can be expressed in the words: inculturation, fraternal presence, respect, dialogue and solidarity with all, especially with the disinherited, the least of men and the excluded.

Preparing missionaries. Missionaries are not improvised, they must be prepared. How? By providing, right from initial formation, an education in the anthropology of reciprocity, an education in multi-cultural life, an education in dialogue and an education in acceptance and hospitality.

7. Education in the anthropology of reciprocity

I believe that an educational and formative "revolution" is necessary at the moment, even in our Order and not only on the level of methodologies, but also on the anthropological level. Going deeply into the anthropology of reciprocity lights up the significance of openness to the other, of the recognition of and respect for the other, of walking with and meeting the other.

In a world wounded by egoisms, wars and violence, it is urgent to inculcate a new humanism, a new *paideia* for the plane-

tary man. Education must feel it is questioned by the presence of many “new faces” which are becoming our “neighbours” and which are “yourself”, according to the intuition of Lévinas. Education must allow itself be questioned by this society, so complex, in order to take responsibility for the other, for which it is demanded that we go out of self, out of our egoisms and egocentrism, of our indifferences and possible hostilities in relation to the different, with the other.

8. Being educated for multi-cultural life

We need, and I see it as an urgent task, to educate ourselves in order to know, communicate and live with diversity, to have reciprocal inter-dependence in the common belonging. It is a matter, definitively, of a multi-cultural education. How can this be done? In my opinion, a multi-cultural education has to base itself on some principles which I, personally, consider to be undeniable:

- Valuing the human person. Believing that the human person, whoever he may be, is worth more than any project or object. That is, in my view, the greatest challenge in the world of today, crucified by fratricidal, ethnic and religious wars caused by egoism and organised violence. There is, therefore, an urgency to learn how to live together: one of the four pillars of the education indicated by the Report of the UNESCO International Commission (1996) for education in the XXI century. The recommendations of the well-

know Jew, Nazim Hikmet a Mchmet, to his son seem very opportune in this context: “Do not live as a guest in this world, or as a nature tourist; live in the world as in your paternal home. Believe in the seed, in the land, in the sea, but, above all, believe in man. Try to feel the pain of the branch which dries up, of the stars which fall, the sadness of a wounded animal wandering about, but especially, let the sadness of man hurt you. I hope that something good of the earth will delight you: the light, the shadows, the four seasons; but I hope, above all, that it will be man that will give you the greatest pleasure”. It seems evermore urgent to have passion for the cause of the human person who merits every respect, all our care and, above all, all our love. What good is it to wish to save nature that is threatened on every side if we do not save man, who is equally threatened? I can only confess my sympathy for the proposal of a well-know scholar, Ricardo Petrella, who suggests that the educational system should be made a priority objective: “to learn means to say hello to the other, which means “recognising the existence of the other”, “learning democracy and living it”, “learning solidarity”. It is urgent, as Paul Ricoeur pointed out many years ago, to understand and teach how to understand what is different. It is urgent to assure everyone of the common human identity by respecting one’s own identity.

- Passing from “I” to “we”. In a culture dominated by

“subjectivism” I see the need to fight openly against exacerbated subjectivism and all that it implies: egoism, ethno-centrism, particularisms which encourage a negative view of the other, which can, in the long run, provoke attitudes of fear, indifference, intolerance and racism in its various forms. Making one’s identity absolute and adherence to one’s particularities lead to a disdain of others and of the other. The solution? It lies in the recognition of the other, in the recognition of the very dignity of the other. The other exists with me, lives with me and together we form the “human family”, as is found in the universal declaration on human rights and, therefore, is worthy of respect in the same way as I want respect for myself.

- To journey on the basis of the other, that is, to allow ourselves be educated by the other, by what is different, in an attitude of openness, humility, gratitude, cooperation and solidarity. To journey from the other, that is, to make the other the criterion and measure of my activities. This leads to listening, respect, love...

9. Being educated to dialogue

As we well know, etimologically, dialogue comes from dia-logos which literally means to allow yourself be penetrated by the word of the other. This ethimological meaning could lead us to think of dialogue as a kind of conversion in which people put themselves into relationships. This relationship alone will

make understanding and respect possible, goals towards which all true dialogue tends.

I see four attitudes as being indispensable for this relationship to be possible:

- Clarity. This, in turn, presupposes that one has a clear sense of one's own personal identity. One cannot give clarity without having one's own identity clear. There cannot be authentic dialogue without knowing where one is starting from, without each one knowing who he is and before whom he is standing, without being faithful to one's own identity. This fidelity to one's identity, far from being lived in a fundamentalist attitude, an attitude which is born of the fear to think and of the illusion of an unquestioning faith, has to be lived in an ongoing attitude of listening and respect, of cordiality and sincerity. Only these attitudes will lead us to grow in dialogue composed of listening and announcing. One cannot build up his identity by locking himself up in himself, without setting out from the other, from the different, from otherness. Formation to dialogue would have to be a chapter of integral development, which is the objective of formation or accompanying the person in the discovery, the re-appropriation and growth of one's own identity.

- Meekness. This is not an attitude in frequent circulation, yet it is fundamental to dialogue. The meek person is free from pride and resentment, including when he has experienced insult or re-

proach. Meekness is incomparable to violent methods. Besides, the meek person learns not to take himself too seriously and is always disposed to learn from the other.

- The capacity to face up to conflicts and the critical confrontation with different positions on the basis of passion for man and his undeniable dignity. Conflict, as we well know, is not bad in itself. Everything depends on how it is handled. I think it is very important to educate ourselves and others to face up to conflicts in a suitable way.

- Confidence. It is not only a question of confidence in one's own words, but is also a recognition by both parties involved in the dialogue. Confidence enables us to tell the truth openly, but always expressing that truth with love.

10. Being educated in the culture of acceptance and of hospitality

This culture finds its roots in the understanding of the other as being unavoidable in order to speak of oneself.

Postmodern culture, dominated by the neo-liberal ideology and sustained by the culture of the media, encourages the creation of narcissistic identities centered on the cultivation of self, of appearances... It becomes urgent, in this context, to form ourselves and others in a culture of acceptance and of hospitality. To do this, I think it is necessary to overcome the formative models based on the concept of individual perfection and to encourage

models founded on concepts of encounter and dialogue.

This involves, in my opinion:

- . Leaving one's social environment, leaving the securities of one's cultural tradition in order to be able to find the difference of one's self and, at the same time, to show how it is precisely in this abandonment of self, in this continuous journey of *kénosis* towards the "stranger", that the person is realised and realises his vocation.

- . Finding words capable of creating communion with people who are different. It is indispensable to form ourselves and others to a respect for the "different", in the capacity to listen and to take into account the points of view of those who are different. It is a priority to form ourselves and others in order "to embrace" and not only "to put up with" the ethnic, cultural and theological differences, in our own fraternities also. In this age of "virtual relationships" it is fundamental to educate ourselves to live in a relationship which should be, at the same time, profound, free and liberating. Only in this kind of relationship can the other be listened to in his "otherness", without falling into the temptation of reducing him to our schemes, until we arrive at eliminating him. It is a question, therefore, of a journey of growth in freedom, understood as self-control which leads to self-commitment.

Conclusion

The franciscan missionary, especially he who

ikompli fpağna 34

ĊIRKULARI TAL-MINISTRU PROVINĊJAL

Prot. No. 0709\58

SAN FRANĠISK 2007

Il-Hajja Kontemplattiva u s-Sinjali taż-Żminijiet

Ghezież Huti f' San Franġisk,

Il-Mulej jagħtikom is-sliem!

Matul din is-sena, l-Ordni Franġiskan gie mzejjen b'żewġ qaddisin ġodda, San Antonio Galvao u San Xmun Lipnica. Bħala preparazzjoni għas-Solennita' ta' Missierna San Franġisk, ahna se nfakkru lil dawn żewġ hutna qaddisin ġodda fil-quddies kollu tal-knejjes tagħna, il-Hadd, 30 ta' Settembru u dak in-nhar stess fis-7.30 pm, meta niltaqgħu fil-Kunvent tal-Belt biex nitolbu t-talba ta' l-Ghasar flimkien ma' l-Isqof ta' Ghawdex, Mons. Mario Grech u wara nieklu xi haġa flimkien. Il-Mulej Ġesu' tana d-don ta' dawn iż-żewġ hutna qaddisin ġodda biex fuq l-eżempju ta' hajjithom nghixu dejjem ahjar il-karizma franġiskana.

San Antonio Calvao, barra li kien devot kbir ta' l-Ewkaristija, huwa waqqaf il-famuzz-Monasteru tal-Klarissi f'Sao Paulo, il-Brazil. Huwa għaraf l-importanza tad-dimensjoni kontemplattiva tas-sejha Franġiskana. Ahna lkoll nafu kemm fil-hidma kollha tiegħu, Missierna Franġisku kontinwament kien ifittex il-mumentu tat-talb u l-ġabra. Quddiem din ir-realta' tat-talb u l-ġabra fil-hajja franġiskana, żgur li lkoll kemm ahna għandna x'nitgħallmu haġna. Ikollna nammettu li haġna drabi qed nittraskuraw il-hajja tat-talb u l-ġabra, anke minhaġba l-istess hidma appostolika. Qed nibnu wisq fuq il-kapaċitajiet umani u personali u nwarbu is-sehem t'Alla fil-hidmiet tagħna.

San Xmun Lipnica, għalkemm kien bniedem intelligenti u mogħni bid-don tal-predikazzjoni popolari, meta sab ruhu quddiem il-qerda tal-pesta li hakmet il-Polonja, huwa ntefa' b'ruhu u b'gismu għal kull għajnuna mal-vittmi, u spiċċa biex miet vittma ta' l-istess pesta qerrieda. Missierna Franġisku, ukoll kellu l-holm u l-ambizzjonijiet personali tiegħu. Izda quddiem is-sejha mill-Kurċifiss ta' San Damjan, huwa għaraf jgħix il-bżonnijiet ta' żmien. Hawn tajjeb li nistaqsu lilna nfusna, kemm ahna miftuhin għal dak li jitolbu minna ċ-ċirkustanzi tal-hajja tallum? Kemm ahna lesti li ninfatmu mill-ambizzjonijiet personali u mil-mod ta' hajja li drajna fiha? Kemm ahna lesti li nsibu hin li nzuru lill-anzjani u l-morda?

Jalla l-eżempji ta' San Antonio u San Xmun jgħinuna niċċelebraw lill-Missierna Franġisku billi nitolbuh jgħinna nifhmu dejjem aktar l-importanza tat-talb u l-ġabra fil-hajja tagħna bħala franġiskani u l-htieġa li nkunu disponibbli għal dak kollu li titlob minna l-karizma franġiskana fid-dinja tallum. Filwaqt li nawguralkom l-isbah xewqat, nitlob il-barka ta' Missierna Franġisku fuqkom il-koll, b'radd il-hajr għal dak kollu li twettqu b'risq is-sejha Franġiskana.

Fraternament.

Mahruga mill-Kurja Provinċjalizja

Il-Belt, Valletta.

Illum, 17 ta' Settembru 2007.

Fra Paul Galea, OFM
Ministru Provinċjal

Fra Marcellino Micallef, OFM
Segretarju tal-Provinċja

SAN ANTONIO GALVAO DE FRANCA

Fra Antonio twieled fis-sena 1739 fi Guaratinguela, fl-Istat ta' San Paolo, il-Brazil. Studja f'Bahia mal-Gizwiti, imma fis-sena 1760 haddan l-Ordni tal-Patrijiet Minuri. Ordna saċerdot fis-sena 1762. Għex għal 60 sena fil-kunvent ta' f San Paolo. Miet fis-sena 1822.

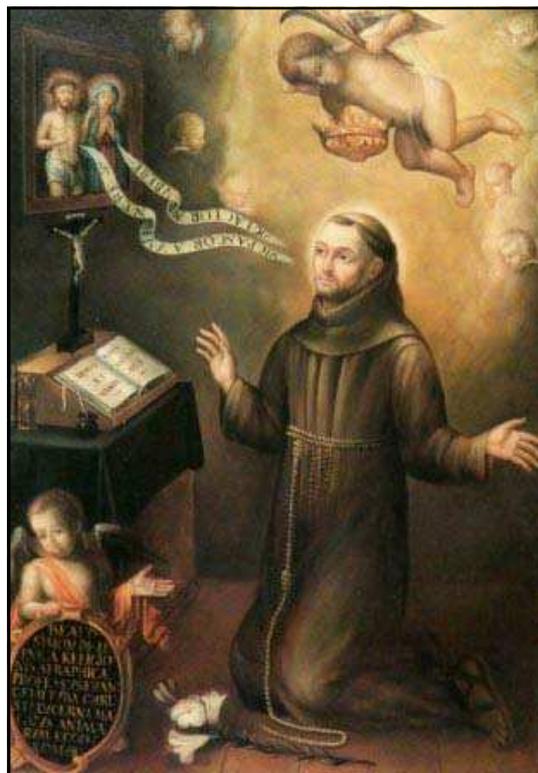
Il-QT il-Papa Benedittu XVI ikkanonizzah fil-Brazil waqt vista pastorali f'Mejju 2007. Il-Kardinal Jose' Saraiva Martin, li għamel it-talb lill-Papa biex jiddikjara lil Antonio qaddis, ipprezentah b'dan il-kliem: "Sa l-aħħar ta' hajtu, Fra Antonio kien għal kul-hadd raġel ta' paċi u mħabba kbira".

Fl-omelija tiegħu, il-Papa Benedittu saħaq fuq il-virtujiet ta' Fra Antonio u qal: "Ejjew niringrazzjaw lil Alla għall-benefiċċji bla jaqtgħu miksuba bil-hidma ta' evanġelizzazzjoni li l-Ispirtu s-Santu kien jis-tampa fl-erwieh bl-interċessjoni ta' Fra Galvao". Żied jgħid ukoll li l-karizma franġiskan, li hu għex fi qbil-mal-Vanġelu, ta kotra ta' frott bis-saħħa tax-xhieda tiegħu bħala de-

vot tal-Ewkaristija, it-tmexxija prudenti ta' kull min fittex il-pariri tiegħu, u d-devozzjoni tiegħu lejn il-Vergni Immakulata, u x-xhieda tiegħu li jagħti kull għajjnuna li seta' lil min jitolbu. U ma' dan inżidu l-hegga kbira għall-konverzjoni tal-midinbin. L-imħabba tiegħu la kienet taf b'limiti u lanqas b'mistrieħ".

Il-Papa kkumenta fuq frazi li kien hemm fil-formola tal-konsagrazzjoni ta' Fra Antonio: "Mulej, ħudli hajti qabel ma noffendi lill-Imqaddes Iben tiegħek". Żied jgħid: "Dan il-kliem għandu jkun il-programm ta' kull nistrani u jghodd hafna għal zminijietna fejn il-pjaċir hu mfittex qabel kollox.

Il-Papa temm l-omelija tiegħu bil-kliem: "Id-dinja



għandha bżonn ta' hajjiet trasparenti, ta' erwieh safja, ta' mhuħ li jirrifjutaw li jiġu meqjusa sempliċiment bħala oġġett ta' pjaċir. Jeh-tieg li bil-qawwa kollha noħduha kontra dawk l-elementi tal-Midja li jirridikulaw il-qdusija taż-żwieġ u tal-verginita' qabel iż-żwieġ".

SAN SIMON TA' LIPNIKA

San Simon twieled f'Lipnika, il-Polonja, bejn is-snin 1435 – 1440. Il-ġenituri tiegħu, Girgor u Anna, taw lil binhom sa minn kmieni formazzjoni soda fil-fidi nistranija. Minkejja li kienu fqar, għamlu kull saġrificju biex jagħtuh ukoll formazzjoni akkademika. Simon għaraf jikkultura

sewwa l-ispirtu tat-talb u mħabba mhegga lejn il-Vergni Omm Alla.

Fis-sena 1545 mar fi Krakow fejn issieheb fl-Akkademja magħrufa ta' Jagiellon. Dik il-ħabta San Ġwann ta' Capistrano kien qed iheggeg lill-insara għall-qdusija. Dan kien jagħmlu l-aktar bil-hajja u l-kelma

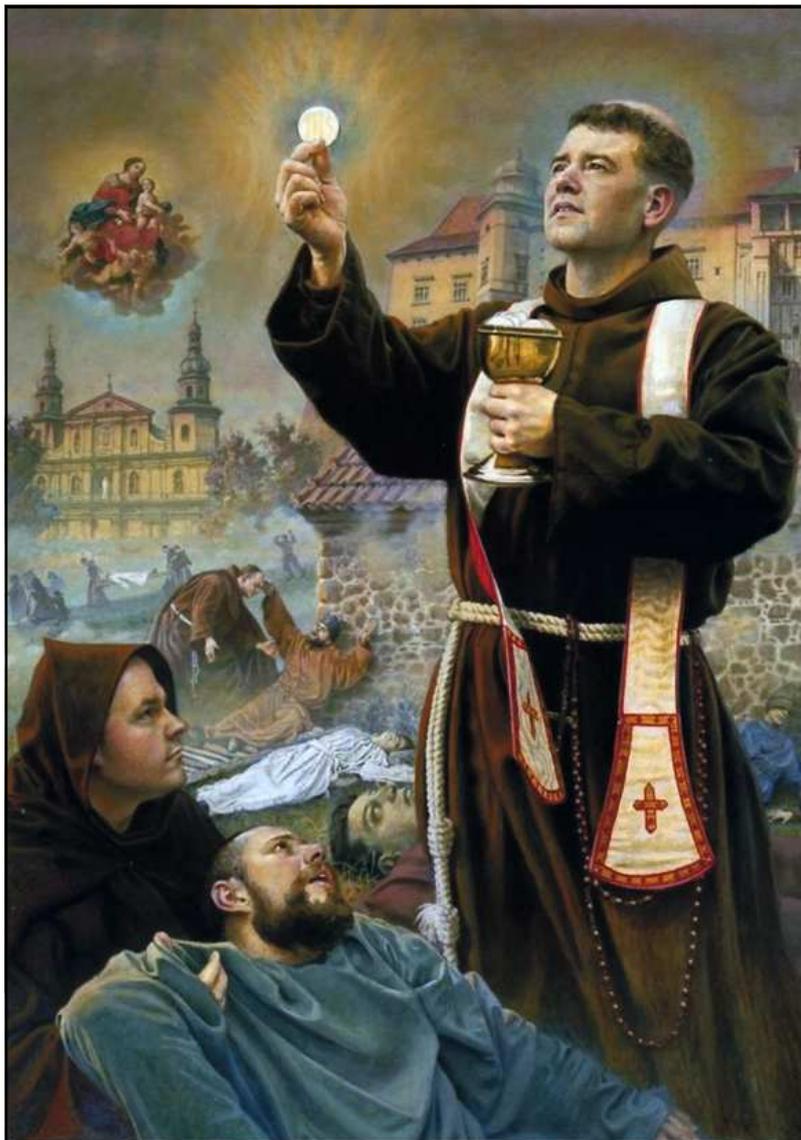
setghana tal-Vanġelu; il-kotra kienet toqghod tisimgħu b'attenzjoni kbira. Simon kien wiehed mill-hafna zghazagh li hass li għandu jiddedika hajtu lil Alla fi hdan l-Ordni Franġiskan. Iddecieda li jabbanduna l-karriera li kellu u fis-sena 1457 beda jghix ir-Regola ta' San Franġisk.

Fis-sena 1460 ġie ordnat saċerdot.

Wettaq hidma appostolika intensiva fi Krakow. Il-Mulej tah id-don tal-kelma u hu ma kienx jehda jżra' fil-qlub tan-nies ta' rieda tajba l-valuri tal-Vangeli. Il-priedki tiegħu kienu frott tal-għaqda intima tiegħu ma' Alla, u wkoll tal-istudju u l-meditazzjoni bla taqta' tal-Bibbja,

Flimkien ma' San Ġwann minn Capistrano u San Bernardin minn Siena, xerred id-devozzjoni lejn l-Isem ta' Ġesu'. Hekk irnexxielu jikkonverti kotra ta' midinbin li kienu fit-triq tat-telfien. Lil San Simon bdew isejhulu: *Il-predikatur l-aktar imħegġeġ*. Irnexxielu jagħmel pellegrinaġġi ta' qima u devozzjoni kemm Ruma, biex iżur l-oqbra tal-Appostli, kif ukoll l-Art Imqadssa fuq il-passi ta' San Franġisk. Dan hegġeġ fih ix-xewqa għall-martirju.

Kien tul l-aħħar sena ta' ħajtu li wera b'ħafna provi l-imħabba li kellu għall-insara ħutu meta feġġet l-epidemija tal-pesta li damet sejra bejn is-snin 1482 – 1483. Il-franġiskani għamlu kull ma setgħu biex jgħinu u jfarrġu l-morda u l-moribondi b'kull mod, inkluzi s-sagramenti. San Simon ħass li dan kellu jkun il-martirju tiegħu. Impenja ruhu sal-aħħar mhux biss li jxandar l-Evangeliu imma li jipprattikah b'ħafna sacrifici personali. Ma damx wisq ma ttiheed hu wkoll bil-pesta, marda li ġarrab b'sabar u rassenjazzjoni attiva f'għaqda ma' Ġesu' Kurċifiss. B'ħarstu



fissa fuqu miet fit-18 ta' Lulju 1482, mimli kuragg u ferħ spiritwali.

Il-Papa Innoċenzu XI iddikjarah Beatu fis-sena 1685. Il-Papa Benedittu XVI ikkanonizzah flimkien ma' San Ġorġ Preca fit-3 ta' Ġunu 2007.

Virtujiet speċjali

San Simon għaraf jgħaqqad flimkien ix-xandir tal-Kelma ta' Alla, b'qalb imħegġa, u mill-kliem jgħaddi għall-fatti. Ried ikun xhud li jit-

wemmen tal-imħabba mħegġa li kienet thegġeġ fil-Qalb ta' Ġesu' għal dawk kollha li Hu feda b'demmu biex isalvahom.

Barra dan, San Simon ipprattika b'mod erojku l-umilta', is-semplicita' u l-ħajja fqira fuq l-eżempju u t-tagħlim ta' San Franġisk. Ma' dawn, inżidu wkoll il-ferħ li kien jimlielu qalbu għall-fatti li l-Mulej riedu għaliH u tah kull għajjnuna matul ħajtu kollha.

*Experience is not what happens to a man.
It is what a man does with what happens to him.*

ikompli mill-ewwel pagna setgħax jieħu sehem minħabba li kellu jiċcelebra l-funeral ta' Mons. Salv Borg (in-neputi tal-mejjet Tumas Xikluna, OFM). L-Ghasar li kien animat mill-istudenti Walter Vassallo u Joseph Ciappara, kif ukoll minn Martin Coleiro, OFM, Leo Ciantar, OFM u Stephen Magro. Numru sabiħ ħafna ta' patrijiet ħadu sehem.

Fir-riflessjoni tiegħu, Mons. Charles Cordina qal li għalih kien mument ta' ferħ meta nġbarna biex niċcelebra il-qdusija ta' dawn qaddisin franġiskani San Antonio Galvao de Franca, OFM u San Simon ta' Lipnika, OFM kif ukoll il-festa ta' San Franġisk, li l-Knisja se tiċcelebra bil-ferħ f'nofs din il-ġimgħa. Għal dawn it-tlett qaddisin, Ġesu' Kristu kien kollox. Għalhekk dan hu mument fejn nisimghu mill-ġdid is-sejha li għamlilna l-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II, biex nergġhu nqajmu fina s-sejha għall-qdusija. Għalhekk hemm bżonn li nsiru lkoll qaddisin u dan ifisser li nsiru lkoll qaddisin flimkien. Jirnexxielna billi jkollna esperjenza ta' Alla. L-inizzjattivi pastorali jridu jkunu mmirati għall-qdusija tagħna.

Mons. Cordina gābar lista' shiħa ta' inizjattivi u ħidmiet li l-Provinċja tagħna qed twettaq ilu. Huwa saħaq li l-esperjenza ta' Ġesu naghmluha meta ngħixu flimkien. Tkellem

dwar id-don tal-qdusija li għandu l-bidu tiegħu fil-magħmudija tagħna. Biex jirnexxielna ngħixu dan il-livell għoli ta' qdusija hemm bżonn:

- **It-talb:** kemm personali u komunitarju. Irridu nogħqodu attenti li ma ninħakmux mill-ħidmiet pastorali għax jogħġbuna. Meta naghmlu hekk, ikunu qed nibnu fuq ir-ramel. Il-ħidmiet isiru f'Ġesu. Irid ikollna l-arti tat-talb. Il-Knisja thares lejna bħala esperti ta' din l-arti u dan jirnexxielna kemm ikunu f'intimita' mal-Mulej.

- **L-Ewkaristija:** Il-kappella fil-kunvent trid tkun waħda mill-kmamar tagħna. Tkun mal-Mulej u li toqgħod miegħu. L-Ewkaristija hija ċ-ċentru naturali tar-religjuż, kif ukoll tal-fraternita' religjuża.

- **Il-Kelma:** kemm irridu inkunu konxji tal-Kelma ta' Alla. Hi trid issostni l-ħajja tagħna. Kif kien u kif kien jgħid San Franġisk biex ma nkunux semmiegħa torox tal-Kelma.

- **Xhieda ta' l-imħabba ta' bejnietna:** Irridu nkunu kapaċi ngħixu flimkien issa. Hawn Mons. Charles Cordina għamel diversi drabi referenzi għaċ-Ċirkulari li kiteb l-Ministru Provinċjal fl-okkażjoni tal-festa ta' San Franġisk. Saħaq ħafna li ngħixu l-esperjenza tal-komunita' billi ngħixu l-esperjenza tal-komunjoni tat-Trinita' Mqaddsa

Mons. Cordina staqsa

x'se noffru lum lis-soċjeta', fejn fiha mhux ftit qed jgħixu ħajja ndividwali. Jeħtieġ li fis-soċjeta' tallum, il-franġiskani jkunu xhieda u sinjal. Hemm bżonn li mmorru lejn l-origini, il-bidu. Hemm bżonn li aħna nkunu protagonisti. L-aħħar parti tad-diskors tiegħu huwa għamel referenza għad-dokumenti:

- **Il-ħajja ta' l-Aħwa fil-Komunita'** (ara d-dokument tal-Kongregazzjoni għall-Istituti ta' Ħajja Religjuża u għas-Socjetajiet ta' Ħajja Appostolika, 02.02.1994)

- **Nergġhu nibdew minn Kristu** (ara d-dokument tal-Kongregazzjoni għall-Istituti ta' Ħajja Religjuża u għas-Socjetajiet ta' Ħajja Appostolika, 16.05.2002)

- Id-Dokumenti tas-Sinodu Djoċesan fejn hemm riferiment għar-Religjużi. Huwa għalaq billi għamel referenza għal-Lezzjoni ta' l-Ghasar fejn fi kliem San Pawl jgħid: "Aħna għandna niżzu ħajr dejjem 'l Alla... ..li ħabbna u tana l-kuraġġ ta' dejjem u t-tama shiħa bil-grazzja, iqawwilkom qalbkom u jsaħħaħkom f'kull għemil u kelma tajba" (2 Tess 2,17).

Wara t-talba ta' l-Ghasar, l-Aħwa ngabru fil-kjostru tal-kunvent fejn kien hemm ikla mħejjija mill-Ministru Provinċjal Paul Galea, OFM u mill-Gwardjan Marcello Ghirlando, OFM flimkien ma' l-Aħwa tal-komunita' tal-Belt.

MIS-SEMINARJU

Illum, 1 ta' Ottubru 2007, Joseph Ciappara, OFM u Walter Vassallo, OFM għamli t-tigid tal-professjoni temporanja waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija, fil-Knisja ta' Santa Marija ta' Ġesu', ir-Rabat.

Iż-żagħżuġ Aaron Abdilla, il-bieraħ ingħaqad mal-fraternita' tar-Rabat biex jissokta l-postulandat. Joseph Cilia ddeċieda li ma jkomplix fil-mixja tal-ħajja kkonsagrata.

Beata Ġdida ta' II Ordni Frangiskan Marie-Céline de la Présentation (1878-1897)

Fis-16 ta' Settembru 2007, il-Kardinal José Saraiva Martins, Prefett tal-Kongregazzjoni tal-Kawżi tal-Qaddisin kien Bordeaux, fi Franza, biex fisem il-Q.T. il-Papa Benedittu XVI jipproklama Beata lis-Soru Klarissa Marie-Céline. Hija mietet fis-sena 1897, fl-eta' ta' 19 il-sena.

La Beata Maria Celina della Presentazione della Beata Vergine Maria (al secolo: Giovanna Germana Castang) nacque a Nojals, piccolo villaggio della Dordogna (Francia), nei pressi di Périgord, il 24 maggio 1878, quinta dei dodici figli dei coniugi Germano Castang e Maria Lafage, poveri coltivatori dei campi ma esemplari testimoni del

Vangelo. Fu battezzata nello stesso giorno della nascita e posta sotto la protezione della Madre del Signore, celebrata in quel giorno con il titolo di Ausiliatrice.

Nel 1882, a soli quattro anni, per aver giocato imprudentemente con i suoi fratelli nell'acqua gelida del ruscello Bournègue, poco distante dalla casa, fu colpita dalla poliomielite, che la privò dell'uso della gamba sinistra. Da quel momento, per tutti, Giovanna Germana fu "la boîteuse".

Nonostante la sua anomalia, la fanciulla non si chiuse in se stessa, ma si rese disponibile nel disbrigo delle faccende domestiche e

nella cura dei fratelli e delle sorelle minori. Iniziò a frequentare la scuola del paese, diretta dalle Suore di San Giuseppe d'Aubenas, mostrando una intelligenza viva e un carattere gioviale e iniziò pure a partecipare alle attività parrocchiali. Purtroppo, a partire dalla primavera del 1887 una serie di prove e di eventi luttuosi si abbatté sulla famiglia Castang, tra cui gravi difficoltà economiche, che determinarono l'abbandono della bella casa e il trasferimento in un alloggio di fortuna, nella località chiamata Salabert, in campagna.

Nell'estrema indigenza in cui venne a



trovarsi la famiglia, Giovanna Germana, che contava appena dieci anni, seppe dimostrare una generosità e una compassione straordinaria per la sua età: si rendeva utile in ogni modo per alleviare il disagio dei suoi cari, mostrandosi servizievole e gioviale. Un triste giorno poi, quando la dispensa non ebbe più nulla da offrire, seppe vincere l'amor proprio, e andò a questuare per il villaggio il vitto necessario alla famiglia. A queste difficoltà materiali si aggiungeva la pena di dover abbandonare la scuola e di non poter più frequentare quotidianamente la chiesa parrocchiale, troppo lontana da raggiungere. Desiderosa di risparmiare alla famiglia altre sofferenze, determinò infine di offrirsi vittima al Signore: il cielo sembrò gradire quel giovane olocausto perché di lì a poco il papà riuscì a trovare un modesto lavoro e a trasferirsi, nell'autunno 1890, con la famiglia a Bordeaux.

Nella speranza di ovviare alla grave menomazione al piede, il 7 febbraio 1891, Giovanna Germana fu ricoverata presso l'ospedale infantile di Bordeaux per essere sottoposta ad intervento chirurgico. Accolse la prova con "angelica pazienza", sopportando le sofferenze dell'operazione. Nei cinque mesi di degenza, come testimoniarono le Figlie della Carità di San Vincenzo de' Paoli, infermiere dell'ospedale, fu un modello di amabilità e di rassegnazione, prestando

piccoli servizi agli altri ammalati. Nel giugno 1891, mentre lentamente recuperava la salute, Giovanna Germana sperimentò un nuovo dolore, perché due dei fratelli più piccoli si ammalarono gravemente di febbre infettiva e morirono. Nel mese di luglio 1891, ancora convalescente, la Beata faceva il suo ingresso nell'Istituto "Nazareth" di

Bordeaux, diretto dalle Suore di Gesù-Maria di Le Dorat, e che accoglieva ragazze in difficoltà, per ricevere quelle cure che la famiglia non poteva più offrirle. Fu quello un periodo fecondo della sua vita, durante il quale iniziò a discernere con più chiarezza la volontà di Dio su di lei. Il 12 giugno 1892 si accostò per la prima volta alla comunione eucaristica con straordinaria devozione e nel successivo mese di luglio ricevette la cresima dal Card. Lecot nella cattedrale di Bordeaux. Già a quel tempo Giovanna Germana dava l'impressione di vivere costantemente alla presenza di Dio, compiendo con esattezza quanto le veniva affidato nel lavoro e trasmesso nello studio. Sul finire di quell'anno altri lutti vennero a provare



ulteriormente la famiglia e a purificare col dolore il cuore dell'adolescente. Il 29 dicembre 1892, la mamma Maria Lafage, per l'improvviso aggravarsi di un'ernia trascurata, morì. Otto giorni dopo, anche il fratello maggiore Luigi, tornato dall'esercito affetto da tubercolosi, dopo essere stato amabilmente assistito da Giovanna Germana, venne a mancare. In questa duplice prova fu ammirevole lo spirito di fede della Beata, vero angelo consolatore del padre e dei suoi cari.

Rimasta ad accudire le due sorelle più piccole, Lubina e Lucia, che aveva condotto con sé all'istituto Nazareth di Bordeaux, Giovanna Germana, andava ormai orientandosi verso una completa donazione al Signore. Quando, nel 1893,

le suore di San Giuseppe d'Aubenas, Congregazione alla quale apparteneva la sorella maggiore Lucie, con il nome di Sr. Maria di San Germano, si offrirono per accogliere nel loro educandato le due piccole orfane, la Beata fu libera di pensare a se stessa, perseguendo il proprio ideale di consacrazione. Le sue prime richieste si indirizzarono presso le clarisse di Bordeaux e poi verso le Suore di Gesù-Maria di Le Dorat, ma entrambe furono respinte, a motivo della sua claudicazione e della giovane età. Rimase dunque presso l'educandato "Nazareth" fino al compimento del diciassettesimo anno, attendendo pazientemente il giorno stabilito da Dio.

Il 6 aprile 1896, lunedì di Pasqua, dopo aver visitato con grande devozione il Santuario di Notre Dame de Talence, chiese un colloquio con le clarisse del vicino monastero "Ave Maria", che conquistate dalla sua straordinaria umiltà e dall'amabilità del suo carattere, promisero di accoglierla, nonostante la sua menomazione fisica. Il 12 giugno 1896, Festa del Sacro Cuore, fece il suo ingresso come postulante. Era la meta a cui aveva aspirato fin da bambina, e alla quale il Cristo la aveva condotta per mano, anche attraverso l'esperienza della sofferenza.

Dopo cinque mesi di probandato, il 21 novembre 1896, festa della Presentazione al tempio della Vergine Santissima, a 18 anni, Giovanna

Germana vestiva l'abito francescano e assumeva il nome religioso di Suor Maria Celina della Presentazione della Beata Vergine Maria. Ancora una volta, come nel giorno del battesimo, la vita di quest'umile creatura era affidata alla materna custodia della Madre di Dio.

"Lasciando le vesti del mondo, pregherò Gesù di bandire ogni pensiero inutile dal mio cuore e di darmi lo spirito religioso; indossando l'abito di clarissa, pregherò lo Sposo mio di rivestirmi dello spirito della mortificazione, della rinuncia e della penitenza; cingendomi del cordone. Gli chiederò di liberarmi dalla falsa libertà e di unirmi a sé con le catene del suo santo amore; mettendomi il santo velo, Lo supplicherò di nascondermi alla vista delle creature. Io voglio vivere nascosta in Dio".

Questi propositi, che la Beata tracciò nel piccolo quaderno di note personali, alla vigilia della sua vestizione, furono da lei luminosamente vissuti nei mesi di noviziato. Nel chiostro Sr. Maria Celina restò fedele alle sue antiche abitudini di carità, alle quali già si era esercitata nel mondo, moltiplicando i piccoli gesti di servizio e di abnegazione a favore delle sue sorelle, ma soprattutto progredi nella via dell'umiltà, della mortificazione e del nascondimento.

La salute della giovane novizia cominciò, però, ben presto a declinare. L'infermità, manifestatasi in una grave forma di tubercolosi, rivelò

la grandezza della sua fede e la ferma volontà di voler completare nel suo fragile corpo quanto ancora manca alla Passione di Cristo, a vantaggio del suo Corpo che è la Chiesa (cfr Col 1, 24). Scriveva nel suo diario a pochi giorni dalla preziosa morte: "Non gradisci olocausto né vittima: eccomi! Sono venuta per prendere la croce. Mi offro vittima come Gesù... fino a questo momento ho sacrificato tutto: affetti, pensieri... dovrò ora essere meno generosa? Oh, no! Eccomi: tagliate bruciate amputate fate di me ciò che gradite, purché il mio amore per voi aumenti sempre più e più! Solo questo chiedo!".

Il 30 maggio 1897, dopo 190 giorni dal suo ingresso nel noviziato, emessa la Professione religiosa "in articulo mortis", Suor Maria Celina faceva il suo ingresso trionfale nell'eternità dei Santi. Nell'ultimo biglietto scritto alla sorella suora aveva confidato: "Mia piccola cara sorella, son ben contenta che presto apprenderete la notizia della mia morte, ...state ben tranquilla, ...il giorno della mia morte sarà per me il più bello...". Nello stesso anno sarebbe morta a Liseux la "piccola" Teresa di Gesù Bambino, sua conterranea, anch'ella fattasi dono di amore per la vita dei fratelli.

***The future belongs
to those who believe
in the beauty of
their dream.***

'God's pauper' building prison in Honduras

Ariadne Massa



The preacher of good news... Padre Alberto Gauci has long been infatuated by the philosophy of St Francis of Assisi. Photo: Jason Borg

Padre Alberto Gauci, OFM turns up wearing jeans, an orange T-shirt and flip-flops, chewing gum in between smoking a Superkings menthol cigarette. His weathered face wrinkles into a smile as he recounts his doctor's advice on his 40-cigarette-a-day habit: "I was warned that if I quit, all the 'monsters' that have lain dormant inside me for years will pop up and I'll come down with some malady."

Living in Honduras,

where he runs a parish of 50,000 single-handedly, cigarettes is the only vice (a habit that comes cheap in Central America) the 60-year-old Franciscan has. Padre Alberto was "infatuated" with St Francis of Assisi, God's pauper, from an early age and at 23, on March 14, 1971 he celebrated his first Mass. He was keen to roll up his sleeves and get his hands dirty and his first job was setting up the Peace Lab with Fr Dionysius Mintoff,

OFM who runs it to this day.

He later spent a year working in the Maltese parish in Canada before being assigned to the Santa Gertrudis parish, part of the Diocese of Olancho in Honduras, when Fr Diegu Vella, OFM died in a car accident.

"I obediently accepted," he said, speaking in impeccable Maltese, with a slight Spanish dialect, bred from 34 years of speaking the language.

Today, Padre Alberto shudders at the thought of ever leaving Honduras, adding that practising the Franciscan philosophy in his parish was much easier than it would ever be in Malta.

This philosophy is to "attend, simply and directly, to the spiritual and other basic human needs, especially those of the poor and disenfranchised, promoting justice for all".

Sitting at Cordina Café, Valletta, sipping a coffee, Padre Alberto is a young-hearted man, with an untiring energy, an infectious smile and deep compassion.

In Malta for a two-week break - he's already getting jittery to return - to meet his family, Padre Alberto insists that he's not here to collect money. "I have always hated the concept that the missions just come to Malta to collect money. I just want to create awareness so that Europe and the US realises that people are dying of hunger on their doorstep," he said. But where would he get the money for his next project?

"The money always comes from somewhere," he said shrugging his shoulders. And providence had better be forthcoming, because Padre Alberto and his team of volunteers are in the process of building a prison in Olancho that will cost about \$900,000, and is being partly funded by the State.

"I just couldn't accept the situation in the present state prison. It was built 90 years ago for 80 people - today there are 427 prisoners cramped inside, literally sleeping on top of one an-

other. Some are there for just stealing a chicken," he said.

After obtaining a large stretch of land, Padre Alberto set about creating a new prison that can take up to 800 people and serve as a rehabilitation centre where prisoners can learn to be useful when they are released back into society. Once it is completed - opening is scheduled for October - it will be handed to the State's Ministry of Security, which will be responsible for running it.

This is just one in a string of projects that Padre Alberto throws himself into, in a parish where many live in abject poverty.

The director of Radio Cattolica de Olancho, Padre Alberto set about to unite the parishes within the diocese through the media and help bring some respite to the suffering.

Some of the successful projects include an orphanage, a home for the elderly, who are usually abandoned to their own fate by relatives, and a home of those who have Aids.

"The only hospital in Olancho usually prescribes Tylenol for every ailment. Luckily, we sometimes get medicine sent over from St Louis and Boston," he said. Another successful venture has been the setting up of a bakery, which makes all the bread for the parish's institutions, and then sells enough to be able to pay the salaries of those who run it.

Life in the Olancho Diocese is not merely a celebration of successful ventures. Padre Alberto witnesses extreme suffering

every day.

For a man who weighs 60kg, surviving on a diet of beans and rice, Padre Alberto relies on his inner strength and his Franciscan spirit to survive.

"I bury eight to 10 babies a week who die of malaria. The infant mortality rate is very high, in a country where wealth comes from having a lot of children," he said.

In such situations these people's faith is what keeps them going.

"Religion for them is everything. Mass can take up to two hours and everybody comes along; it's a big celebration," he said.

He makes sure that he is able to reach the villages in his parish and on Sundays he rises early and sometimes travels for four hours - in a canoe, jeep or on foot - between each Mass.

"Being there you fall in love with the people and their basic values in life."

THE TIMES

20.08.07

Ara wkoll l-artiklu ta' Albert Gauci, OFM: "Kont il-habs u ghamiltu xi haga ghalija", li deher fil-harga ta'

L-AHBAR

April 2007.

St. Francis of Assisi: practical approach to life

Norbert Ellul-Vincenti, OFM

"Did St Francis preach to the birds? Whatever for? If he really liked birds he would have done better to preach to the cats."

So spake Rebecca West. I don't know if she was just being facetious or waxing a little mischievous, but there is some sense in those words as there is also much folly.

"If you want peace prepare for war," was the Roman adage, fully conscious and ever wary of the existence of enemies. In order to survive in this world, you must always be at least as strong as the strongest.

Join the club of the greatest.

And so comes the criticism that Francis should have preached to the cats, since it was presumably impossible, for the birds to "prepare for war", though they could use their wings for flight.

But the fact is that Fran-

cis did preach to the cats. It is not recorded that he actually spoke with cats, but there is a general report that he preached to all creatures, to the worm and the cricket, the swallow and the lark, the sun and the moon, fire and water, and called them all brothers and sisters – though we Maltese have to make Ohti x-Xemx of Frate Sole and Hija l-Qamar of Sorella Luna, thus changing their gender to respect our linguistic syntax.

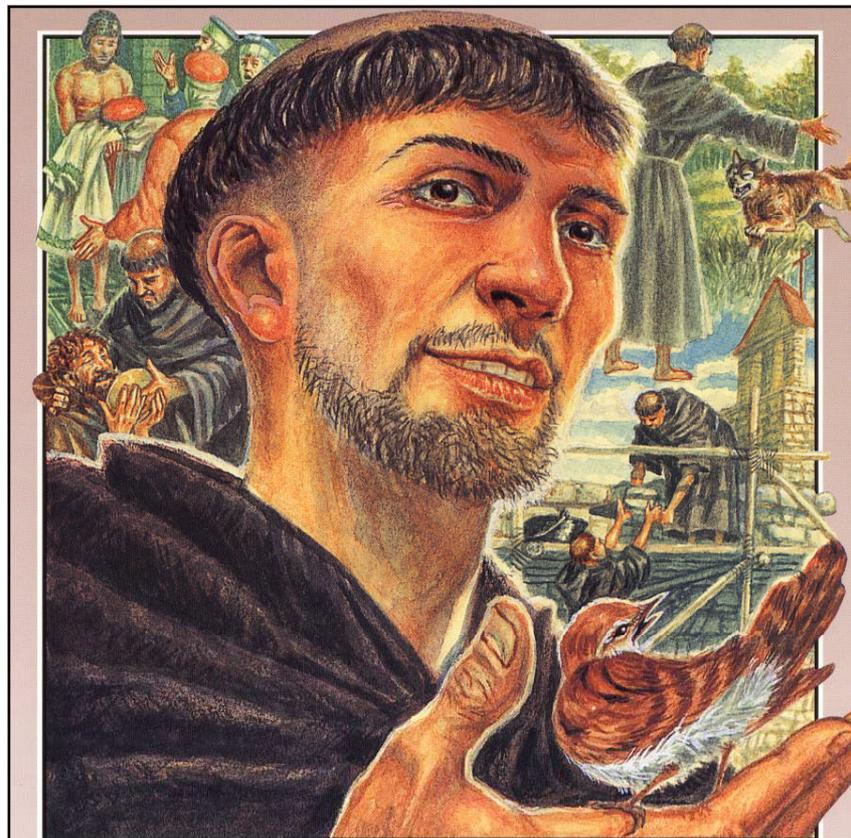
And Francis would not have stopped at the cats, seeing that he also preached to Brother Wolf

who was gobbling up the little children of Gubbio. He arranged a pact between the Gubbians and Brother Wolf: they were to feed him and he was to let the children feed and grow. And we do not hear that the marital vows of this marriage of convenience between Wolf and Gubbians were ever broken. Vows are not made to be broken. No decent Brother Wolf would break them.

You see, Francis did not think of life as a fight between creatures; or a competition even. Nor did he think of our life as a sort of survival of the fittest,

where what we call the law of the jungle held sway. Oh no. He was a true ecologist. He knew his Bible and he followed Christ.

Well not really an ecologist. Or perhaps we can allow him to be called an ecologist, since he is the patron of ecology,



but he was really more than that. He was a converted man.

He was struck by the humility of God wanting to be born in a manger, little and poor, so all creatures could be drawn to him without fear. It was the opposite of flexing your muscles to quell all opposition. Christ's way, and that of Francis was to humble yourself so much that no one would be afraid of you.

Having given away all he possessed, Francis found that he became the richest man on earth, for the whole earth of creatures, from now on, beckoned with fraternal gestures. Now everything was his, brother and sister. And he started from the Sun., the great Lord of the skies, Messer lo Frate Sole, and the moon, Sorella Luna, and the lesser lights of the firmament. It is nice to be rich and poor at the same time: nothing that can be stolen away, and yet everything that you need to love and to hold, forever and ever.

Francis' heart went out to the swallow and the cricket and the rabbit. "Where the modern cynic sees something 'buglike' in

everything that exists," observed German writer-philosopher Max Scheler, "St. Francis saw even in a bug the sacredness of life."

"Praise to you, my Lord, for our Sister Mother Earth. Praise to you, my Lord, with all your creatures."

So he sang to celebrate his joy. Friends abounded.

"No one is to be called an enemy, all are your benefactors, and no one does you harm. You have no enemy except yourselves."

And again, "Blessed is the servant who loves his brother as much when he is sick and useless as when he is well and can be of service to him. And blessed is he who loves his brother as well when he is afar off as when he is by his side, and who would say nothing behind his back that he might not, in love, say before his face."

He knew very well what Jesus tells us in Mark's Gospel (7,20-22), that it is not the material world that is evil but the uncontrolled yearnings of the heart.

"What comes out of a person is what can make him unclean, for evil designs

come out of the heart; theft, murder, adultery, jealousy, greed, maliciousness, deceit, indecency, slander, pride and folly."

Francis chastised his body, calling it affectionately Bro Ass, but he knew that there was nothing wrong there, except that desires and longings had to be kept under control. I think it was with relief that when he came to die, he gratified Brother Ass with some of those baked sweets he loved in particular. On his death bed, after breaking bread with his brethren and hearing the Passion according to John, the blind Francis asked to be laid out on the bare ground. He could not contain himself, as he sang with joy. At the approach of Sister Death, he sent for Frate Jacoba as he called one of his fans, Madonna Settesoli, so she could bring him some of her special bakings that he loved so much. He died with the taste of honey on his lips and the song of praise on his tongue. Bystanders saw flights of larks soaring up into the sky as if to accompany their champion into his new abode.

Fraternita' ta' Benghazi

Vigarju u Ekonomu Fra Alan Castillo, OFM

Fra Antonio Maciejowski, OFM temm l-impenn tiegħu fil-missjoni ta' Benghazi, il-Libja wara 20 sena servizz.

Għamlu dak li jgħidkom Hu

Anton Farrugia, OFM



Il-Ministru Ġeneral jmexxi quddiesa konċelebrata f'Nazaret. Fil-ġenb jidher Anton Farrugia, OFM

Bejn l-1 u t-8 ta' Lulju, jiena flimkien ma' ħutna Lorrie Zerafa u Joseph Magro ħadt sehem fil-Kapitlu tal-Ħsajjar li l-Ministru Ġeneral sejjah fl-Art Imqaddsa għall-aħwa li għamlu l-Professjoni Solenni f'dawn l-aħħar għaxar snin. Verament jien ilni li professajt solennement ħdax il-sena imma jien ħadt sehem f'dan il-Kapitlu billi kont parti mill-kummissjoni ta' tnejn.

Ix-xewqa tal-Ministru Ġeneral kienet li bħala parti mill-preparazzjoni għat-tifikira tat-800 sena mit-twaqqif ta' l-Ordni, dan il-Kapitlu jkun mument importanti biex l-Ordni jisma lehen l-aħwa

żgħażaġh, il-holm u x-xewqat tagħhom, id-difikultajiet u l-beżgħat li għandhom.

Bħala motto għal dan il-Kapitlu, il-kummissjoni għazlet is-smiġh tal-Kelma t'Alla fi qbil ma' l-għażla tal-post: l-Art Imqaddsa fejn il-Kelma tlaħħmet fil-ġuf tal-Verġni Marija, ta' Nazareth. Fil-fatt l-ewwel ħamest ijiem għaddejnihom ġewwa Nazareth, qrib is-santwarju tat-Thabbira tal-Mulej b'waqfiet ħdejn il-baħar ta' Tiberiade u fuq il-muntanja Tabor, fejn kellna *lectio divina* mal-Kardinal Martini.

L-aħħar granet tal-Kapitlu komplejnihom Ġerusalem u spiċċajna Betleħem bit-tiġdid tal-

Professjoni. Interessanti u sbieħ kienu ċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet ta' l-Ingress solenni fil-Bażilka tal-Qabar ta' Kristu u l-*Via Crucis* mat-toroq tal-Belt, li qatt ma raw daqshekk patrijiet f'daqqa! Fil-fatt minn barra n-numru tal-patrijiet li jgħixu f'Ġerusalem, in-numru tal-patrijiet kapitulari kien ilaħħaq mal-200 oħra! Għalkemm dan kien it-Tielet Kapitlu tal-Ħsajjar għall-patrijiet żgħażaġh ta' l-Ordni, (l-Ewwel wieħed kien sar fl-1995 ġewwa Santiago di Campostella fi Spanja u t-Tieni f'Canidè fil-Brażil fis-sena 2001), dan kien l-ewwel Kapitlu li sar fil-preżenza tal-Ministru Ġeneral u d-Definiturju tiegħu.

Il-Patri Ġeneral esprima żewġ konvinzjonijiet u żewġ beżgħat. Il-Ministru hu konvint li l-ħajja frangiskana hi sabieħa u għaldaqstant irridu ngħixuha fil-milja kollha tagħha mingħajr riservi. Bhal kull ħajja oħra, il-ħajja tagħna mhix faċli u għaldaqstant kull wiehed minna jrid jagħmel għażla bejn il-bieb il-wiesa li jwassal għat-telfien u l-bieb id-dejjaq li jwassal għall-ħajja fil-milja tagħha. Il-beżgħat tal-Ministru Ġeneral huma l-istrutturi u r-riskju li nsibu ruħna komdi kif aħna u nsiru medjokri.

Waqt il-Kapitlu, xi patrijiet zgħażaġħ qalu li jhossuhom qed jiġu wżati biex jinżammu ċerti strutturi fil-Provinċji li m'għadhomx jagħmlu sens. Fuq dan il-Patri Ġeneral jemmen li l-istrutturi għandhom ikunu għas-servizz tal-ħajja u mhux għall-kuntrarju. Hemm strutturi tal-ħajja li

jgħinuna nżommu ordni fil-ħajja tagħna personali u fraterna bħal ma huma l-mumenti tat-talb, ix-xogħol, il-Kapitli lokali u l-formazzjoni permanenti.

Nistieden lil kull wiehed mill-aħwa biex jaqra dan il-messaġġ, halli lkoll flimkien inkomplu niktbu b'ħajjitna paġni sbieħ fl-istorja ta' l-Ordni tagħna.

Skond il-Ġeneral, mingħajr dawn l-istrutturi huwa diffiċli li nibqgħu fidili għal dak li wiegħdna imma għandna bżonn urgenti li nnaqsu u jekk hemm bżonn innegħħu strutturi oħra. Hemm bżonn tenna l-Ministru li nagħtu kwalità lill-ħajja tagħna b'relazzjonijiet ta' kwalità ma' Alla, magħna nfusna u ma' l-oħrajn.

Il-Ministru Ġeneral ma kienx kuntent bl-ittra tassew sabieħa u li kiteb mill-qalb lill-aħwa zgħażaġħ ta' l-Ordni kollu, imma lejn l-aħħar tal-Kapitlu talab lilna l-membri tal-Kummissjoni li hejjiet dan il-Kapitlu biex nagħmlu messaġġ lill-Ministri, il-Kustodji u l-Aħwa kollha. Aħna għamilna dan fuq is-silta tat-Thabbira ta' l-Anglu lil Marija li nebbħitna sa mill-bidu tal-laqgħat tagħna ta' thejjija fil-għażla tal-motto ta' dan it-Tielet Kapitlu tal-Ħsajjar: *Secundum Verbum Tuum*. Nistieden lil kull wiehed mill-aħwa biex jaqra dan il-messaġġ, halli lkoll flimkien inkomplu niktbu b'ħajjitna paġni sbieħ fl-istorja ta' l-Ordni tagħna. Il-Patri Ġeneral talabna nħarsu lura lejn l-imghoddi tagħna b'sens kbir ta' radd il-ħajr, li l-futur inħarsu lejħ b'tama qawwija u li sadanittant ngħixu bil-ħegġa tal-bidu, dan iż-żmien.



Message to the Ministers, Custodes and all the Friars

SECUNDUM VERBUM TUUM

III International Chapter of Mats of young Friars

The Holy Land, 1st to 8th July 2007

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you" (Lk 1:26-28).

The Most High, Almighty and Good Lord called us by name and gathered us together in the Holy Land as an international Fraternity in Nazareth, first of all, then in Galilee, and finally in Bethlehem, in order to lead us to the sources of our vocation and mission in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, whom we confessed as the Crucified and Risen One in Jerusalem. Two hundred of us, from every Entity of the Order, met with the Minister and Definitory General in order to listen to the Word of God together, to look to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Nazareth, to celebrate the Eucharist and to share our hope in the very process of the Grace of our Origins. The Word of God made us more disposed to accept each other and to dialogue among ourselves in a frank and serene manner during these days. It also broadened our view of ourselves, of the world, of the Church and of the Friars by educating us to a positive vision of faith about the reality and present suffering at this unique time in history.

We wish to express our gratitude to our Ministers and Custodes, and to the Friars of the different Entities for having sent us as their delegates to this III Chapter of Mats of young Friars.

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus... Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?" (Lk 1:29-34).

Listening to the Word of God, however, is not painless. It provoked us, it helped us to recognise the positive elements present among us. Many of us realised that our Fraternities are places in which it is possible to live the Gospel. A lively hope, the beauty of our vocation and the joy of living it, by returning to the first love which had won us over, came to the fore among us. We learned that we are loved by the Lord and, in following His footprints in this blessed Land, we renewed our "yes". We are truly aware that we can only "start afresh from Christ".

At the same time, the Word of God has uncovered our weaknesses. A great variety of activities have been entrusted to us, young Friars Minor. We often have to face the difficulties of our choice of life, but we do not always feel supported in our vocation. We are aware of the existence of some obstacles to dialogue within our fraternities. We often have to face loneliness and frustration and we feel the burden of having to keep alive structures we have inherited through tradition, which make our journey burdensome and, not infrequently, have become an anti-testimony.

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God" (Lk 1:35-37).

Enlightened also by the grace of the holy places in which our Chapter was held, we shared our hopes and worries with the Minister and Definitory General. We wish to highlight the need for a more profound and less "institutional" dialogue in fraternity,

and we insist on trustingly asking the Friars for opportunities of effective spiritual accompaniment after initial formation also. Communication between us on different levels is also very important for taking care of healthy and profound fraternal relationships. This leap in quality of our relationships can only be lived in the everyday, which requires fidelity and discipline.

We manifest the urgency of becoming more open to ways of collaboration between Provinces and Conferences, as well as other ecclesial bodies, to take greater care of our relationships with the territory (inculturation) and to avoid dispersion, which results from the lack of having long-term projects of life. We also re-affirmed our presence among the unimportant and poor, "our teachers" (GG.CC. 93,1), as an indispensable criterion for living in transparency and evangelical credibility.

In this sense, we also reflected on the importance of considering, with greater decision, the place of the "grace of work" (Rb V,1) in our personal and fraternal life. On the basis of this we once again came to ask ourselves what living *sine proprio*, as minors, as pilgrims and strangers, in itinerancy which is above all the docility to keep moving and searching, means for us today. It is this attitude of heart which would permit us to read and interpret the signs of the times while travelling through this world "like someone who could see the invisible" (Heb 11:27). It therefore seems urgent to us to join the prayerful reading of the Word to a *lectio mundi*, that is, to the ability to read the concrete reality of the human person and of creation, and of their aspirations to peace and reconciliation. It is in this way that we can respond to our call to evangelisation and to the *ad gentes* mission in order to fill the earth with the Gospel of Christ. We also confirmed the need for a solid and viable intellectual formation in order to read the reality of our cultures, to study Scripture in depth and to proclaim the Gospel.

In our listening and dialogue we became more aware that these objectives will not be achievable without a personal decision to take practical steps of conversion regarding the use of our time, above all of that dedicated to meeting the Lord, which asks us to grow in our capacity to create silence in and around us, and also regarding the energy spent on our brothers and in our multiple services to God's Kingdom. "Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said'. And the angel left her" (Lk 1:38).

We, like the disciples of Emmaus, could be tempted to become discouraged, to close in on ourselves in sterile criticisms of the "system", when faced with the difficulties of our life. We make our own the proposal to ask for clarity and the courage to listen to the Word of God and to make some practical and significant decisions so as to have a life that is less distracted and more focused on what is essential. The "methodology of Emmaus" will be a great help to us in passing "from Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel" (SFO Rule, II,5).

We thank the Custos of the Holy Land and all the Friars who helped us feel at home through a truly extraordinary welcome. We were able to appreciate better, to discover in many cases, this very ancient, significant and precious presence of the Order.

"Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home" (Lk 1, 56).

We, confirmed in our faith and hope, return to our countries and fraternities believing that our form of life is feasible and we ask all the older Friars, who are much more numerous than we, to help us to make it so. Without them, without you all, we will not be able to live our life as Friars Minor fully at this time and in our cultures.

PROPOSALS

- Continue to develop the sense of belonging to an international Fraternity, which is called to become ever more intercultural. The study of languages, participation in international meetings, experiences of collaboration with other Entities, and a greater openness to the missionary projects of the Order should be encouraged in order to achieve this end.

- Periodical meetings between Friars Under 10 on the level of Conferences, in order to share our passion for the Kingdom and to identify and prepare our journey towards the future, should be encouraged.

- It is hoped that each Entity will permit and encourage the birth of a Contemplative-Fraternity-in-Mission, open to inter-provinciality and internationality, which would have a project

of fraternal community life, to be built along the journey, as a fundamental criterion.

- It is hoped that Fraternities living the primacy of listening to the Word of God in a more intense way and in which other Friars could find periodic help in giving new life to this dimension of our life could be established in the Entities or Conferences.

- In the light of the conversion to the Gospel, ways of sharing and of active presence among the present-day poor should be audaciously encouraged so that the life of many may be more just, worthy of the human person and fraternal. It is urgent, therefore, to take up once again the discourse regarding our minority and poverty.



Fra Anton Farrugia, Fra Joseph Magro u Fra Lorrie Zerafa mal-Ministru Ġeneral Jose' Rodriguez Carballo

ikompli minn paġna 19

on the basis of his adhesion to Christ, gives of himself totally, without reservations or limitations of energies or time; he who gratuitously commits himself; he who lives the logic of gift to the extreme, knowing that nothing belongs to him, that everything is a gift which is received and, therefore, has to be restored; he who constantly goes out of self in order to go to meet the other, the different (cf. The Lord speaks with us on the road, 19 - 25). The franciscan missionary, in particular he who lives among the Muslims, is he who, basing his life on the beatitudes, opts for dialogue of life, for a presence in frontier areas, giving witness that "there is no one all-powerful, except Him" (Lto 9).

The franciscan mission, like that of Francis, was derived from his intimate union with Christ, was nourished by the Word of the Gospel and by the sacrament of the Eucharist. His encounter with the Lord was poured out, necessarily, in the mission (cf. Jn 4, 4ss). The discovery of Love opened him to love of others, no matter how different they might be. On the mission, the Friar Minor transmits the Love which conquered his heart rather than a doctrine, and involves what constitutes the richness and the beauty of his life, rather than transmit what he learned intellectually, and, at all times, "preserves peace of spirit and body out of love of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Adm 15, 2).

All that has been said places us in perfect condition to go and remain among the Saracens and other unbelievers. The missionary methodology which our form of life proposes will open the door to the other, as it opened the door to the heart of the Sultan one day, and the confrontation of some against others will give way to dialogue and respect for each other.

Kapitlu Provincjali ta' l-Immaculate Conception Province (U.S.A)

Diversi patrijiet tal-Provincja qed jagħtu s-servizz tagħhom fil-misjoni li l-Provincja ta' Immaculate Conception għandha b'mod speċjali fil-Ħonduras u l-Kanada.
Prot. No. 0709/62

Fr. Robert M. Campagna, OFM
Provincial Minister
Immaculate Conception Province
125 Thompson Street
New York, NY 10012-3110
e-mail Rmcofm@aol.com

26th September 2007

TO ALL BROTHERS GATHERED IN ASSISI FOR THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

The Lord give you peace!

In this moment of grace which the Lord is offering you, as you are gathered to celebrate with joy your Provincial Chapter in Assisi, the brothers of the Maltese Province of the Friars Minor are united with you in prayer.

"You are all brothers" (Mt 23,8 – Earlier Rule 22,33). As sons of the one Father in heaven and brothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, as we walk along the way of Gospel life revealed by the Lord to the founder of our Orders, our Father Francis, we are all called to live together our fraternal life, to love one another and to nourish one another more than a mother nourishes and takes care of her son according to the flesh (cfr. Later Rule 6,8).

This challenge is ever present and is not easy, in the same way that it was in the very beginning of the Order. The Lord is giving you another grace to renew your commitment in order to cultivate among yourselves the spirit of familiarity and reciprocal friendship. May you show one another the same courtesy in your way of life and the joy of the spirit together with all the other virtues. May this moment of grace be an opportunity to offer one another mutual courage, in order to have hope, peace and joy, and in order that each and every one of you may feel in his heart the grace of the Lord "who gives us brothers". May you discern without fear the will of the Lord in order to do whatever He asks of you. In this way this experience of brothers gathered together under one roof, will be an experience that will lead us all to pray with the psalmist, "How good, how delightful it is to live as brothers all together! For there the Lord bestows his blessings, everlasting life" (Ps.133).

I am convinced that the Lord will continue to sustain you and your province and fill you all with his blessings and with new vocations.

I promise you the prayers of all of us brothers, and show you once again our thanks for your cooperation and support. I wish you all peace and good from the Lord.

Fr. Paul Galea, OFM
Minister Provincial

Nifirġu lil Fra Samwel Chetcuti, OFMConv.

li ġie magħżul Ministru Provinċjal.

Lilu u lid-Definituri l-godda

Nixtiequlhom paċi u ġid.

MINISTRU PROVINĊJAL ĠDID OFMConv.

Prot. No. 0709\59

Fra Alfred Calleja, OFMConv.,
Ministru Provinċjal,
Kunvent San Franġisk,
Triq ir-Repubblika,
Valletta (Malta).

21 ta' Settembru 2007

Lill-Aħwa miġbura għall-Kapitlu Provinċjali

Il-Mulej jagħtikom is-sliem!

F'isem il-Ministru Provinċjal, Fra Paul Galea, OFM, li jinsab fuq żjara fraterna fil-Libja, flimkien mal-Ministru Ġeneral Fra Jose' Rodriguez Carballo, OFM, u f'isem l-aħwa kollha tal-Provinċja ta' San Pawl Appostlu, Malta, ninghaqdu magħkom f'dan il-mument hekk importanti, meta nhar it-Tnejn, 24 ta' Settembru 2007, tagħtu bidu għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-Kapitlu Provinċjali.

Aħna lkoll imsejġin biex ngħixu l-forma ta' ħajja ewanġelika rivelata mill-Mulej lil Missierna San Franġisk (cf Test 14), billi ngħixu flimkien il-ħajja fraterna, inħobbu lil xulxin u mmantnu lil xulxin aktar milli omm thobb u tmantni lil binha skond il-ġisem (cf RB 6,8).

Miġbura flimkien mal-Ministru Ġeneral tagħkom, Fra Marco Tasca, OFMConv., se tgħarblu sewwa l-qagħda attwali tal-ħajja u l-ħidma ta' l-aħwa tal-provinċja u titrattaw dwar inizjattivi ġodda u l-affarijiet l-aktar importanti u tiddeċiedu dwarhom fi spirtu ta' qbil flimkien.

Il-Kapitlu Provinċjali huwa okkażjoni mill-isbaħ biex l-aħwa jikkultivaw aktar bejniethom l-ispirtu ta' familjarita' (cf RB 10,5) u l-ħbiberija reċiproka; juru lejn xulxin il-ħlewwa fl-imġieba u l-ferħ ta' l-ispirtu u l-virtujiet l-oħra kollha. Fl-istess ħin huwa wkoll mument fejn miġburin ilkoll flimkien toffru lil xulxin l-inkuraġġiment għat-tama, il-paċi u l-hena. Mument mill-isbaħ, fejn il-kommunjoni fraterna tissaħħaħ, imqanqlin mill-imħabba lejn xulxin.

Il-Kapitlu hu mument ieħor ta' grazzja li l-Mulej qed jagħtikom, fejn tistgħu tiftakru fl-imġhoddi b'radd il-ħajr, tgħixu l-preżent b'entużjażmu u tharsu 'l quddiem lejn ġejjieni bil-fiduċja.

Jalla tharsu lejn il-ġejjieni li lejħ qed jimbutakom l-Ispirtu tal-Mulej biex tagħmlu ħwejjeġ oghla milli diġa' wettaqtu. Nakkumpanjawkom bit-talb tagħna, speċjalment quddiem il-problema tal-vokazzjonijiet, li hi tassew sfida li tolqotna direttament, naghmlu l-qalb u nittamaw fil-Mulej Ġesu' li ma jieqaf qatt isejjaħ għall-mixi warajħ. Jalla tistagħnu b' aktar vokazzjonijiet. Marija Immakulata, ix-Xebba li saret Knisja (SBVM1), tigwidana, ħalli fuq l-eżempju tagħha, inkunu qaddejja tal-Mulej.

Paċi u ġid!

Fra Marcellino Micallef, OFM
Segretarju tal-Provinċja

informazzjoni

Mastru Ġdid

Fil-laqgħa tad-Definitorju Provinċjali, li saret nhar it-Tnejn, 3 ta' Settembru 2007, f'Porziuncola Retreat House, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, id-Definitorju għażel bhala Mastru ta' l-istudenti u tal-postulanti lil Fra Joseph Magro, OFM. Bhala Viċi-Mastru ġie maħtur il-gwardjan tal-fraternita', Fra Martin Coleiro, OFM.

Vaganzi f'Malta

Diversi patrijiet li qegħdin jagħtu s-servizz tagħhom 'l hinn minn xutna, ġew Malta għall-granet ta' mistireh. Fosthom kien hawn Albert Gauci, OFM, missjunarju fil-Ħonduras (ara wkoll l-

intervista tiegħu f' L-AĦBAR) Charles Diacono, OFM u Stephen Sciberras, OFM li qed iwettqu hidma pastorali mal-morda u l-familjari tagħhom li jitilqgħu Londra għall-kura, Jimmy Zammit, OFM kappillan fil-parroċċa ta' Immaculate Conception, Toronto, il-Kanada, Raymond Falzon, OFM Associate Pastor fil-parroċċa ta' Saint Francis, Toronto, il-Kanada, Noel Muscat, OFM li huwa Diskriet (Definitur), Mastru tan-Novizzi u Segretarju tal-Formazzjoni fl-Art Imqaddsa u Pierre Farrugia, OFM li qed ikompli l-istudji fl-Universita' Frangiskana ta' l-Antonianum, f'Ruma.

Assemblea ta' l-UFME

Il-Ministru Provinċjal Paul Galea, OFM se jieħu sehem fit-VIII Assemblea ta' l-UFME, li se ssir fil-belt ta' Sarajevo (Bosnia-Erzegovina), bejn 9-14 ta' Ottubru 2007. It-tema prinċipali se tkun *Il dialogo inerreligioso in Europa, in modo particolare con l'Islam.*

Tony Briffa, OFM ġie operat wara li l-bierah soffra minn attakk tal-qalb. Il-kundizzjoni ta' saħħtu hija għall-aħjar. Huwa jinsab C.C.U. Nitolbu għalih u nawgurawlu minn qalbna fejgan ta' malajr.

Rapreżentant fil-Kunsill Presbiterali

F'votazzjoni fost l-aħwa kollha tal-Provinċja f'Malta (50 patri), ġie magħżul Fra Marcello Ghirlando biex jirrapreżenta lill-Provinċja fil-Kunsill Presbiterali għas-Sessjoni 2007-2010.

Ir-riżultat kien hekk:

Fra Marcellino Micallef, OFM	-	11 vot
Fra Marcello Ghirlando, OFM	-	4 voti
Fra Anton Farrugia, OFM	-	4 voti
Fra Martin Coleiro, OFM	-	3 voti
Fra George Bugeja, OFM	-	2 voti
Fra Ġużep Beneditt Xuereb, OFM	-	1 vot
Fra Norbert Ellul Vincenti, OFM	-	1 vot
Fra Richard S. Grech, OFM	-	1 vot

Rigward l-għażla għall-Kunsill Presbiterali, wara li ftaħt u għoddejt il-voti, jiena staqsejt lil Fra Marcellino jekk jaccettax. Izda huwa wrieni x-xewqa li wara esperjenza ta' tlett snin fil-Kunsill Presbiterali (2001-2004), iħoss li huwa għandu jagħti opportunita' lill-haddiehor. Wara Fra Marcellino, fil-lista kien imiss lil Fra Marcello, skond iż-żmien tal-professjoni u dan accetta.

Fra Paul Galea, OFM (Ministru Provinċjal)



Archbishop expresses gratitude

In a letter sent to Fr. Richard S. Grech OFM, Rector of the Pastoral Centre 'Gesù il-Habib', the Archbishop expressed his gratitude for a sum of money that was gathered from the Pastoral centre for philanthropic causes. In fact the sum of Lm1000 was gathered and given to the Archbishop.

Further on in the same letter, the Archbishop thanked all the community that gathers in this pastoral centre for their contribution. On the other hand the Archbishop has expressed his personal wish to visit the pastoral centre in the coming days.



Restawrazzjoni tal-kampnar tal-knisja tal-Ħamrun

F'dawn l-ahhar jiem tlesta x-xogħol fuq il-kampnar tal-knisja ta' San Franġisk, il-Ħamrun. Saret manutensjoni lil kampnar kollu minn ġewwa, id-dawl, il-qniepen u speċjalment ingħatat dehra ġdid lill-erba' uçuħ

ta' l-arloggi.

Fil-ġimghat li ġejjin se tingħata dawra wkoll il-faċċata tal-knisja u fl-ahhar ta' Jannar tibda tinzebaħ mill-ġdid il-knisja kollha minn ġewwa.

F'dawn l-ahhar sentejn ingħata manutensjoni l-kunvent kollu, speċjalment ir-refitorju u l-kċina ġdida li saret, kif ukoll iċ-Ċentru San Franġisk.

Il-Ministru Ġeneral, Fra Jose' R. Carballo, OFM sar jaf li Fra Ġużepp Beneditt Xuereb qed isofri minn kanser fl-istonku. Ġentilment bagħatlu pergamena bil-barka ta' San Franġisk, iffirmata minnu, u irringrazzjah



tas-servizz li ta fi Grottaferrata u fl-Antonianum; offra quddiesa għall-bżonnijiet tiegħu nhar is-Salvatur. Dan il-ġest ġie apprezzat ħafna minn Fra Ġużepp Beneditt f'dawn il-mument diffiċli. Jixtieq ukoll jirringrazzja lil dawk l-Aħwa li, flimkien ma' ħafna ħbieb, li wrew solidarjeta' miegħu fix-xhur li għaddew.

Assisi flimkien

Minn nhar it-Tnejn 30 ta' Lulju sa' 7 ta' Awissu 2007, Fra Joseph Magro ofm, Animatur Vokazzjonali u Fra Stephen Magro ofm, Mastru, flimkien mal-istudenti Fra Walter Vassallo ofm, Fra Joseph Ciappara ofm u l-postulanti Joseph Cilia, Aaron Abdilla, sejrjn Assisi. Magħhom ser jingħaqdu żewġ zġhażagħ li qed jagħmlu dixxerniment vokazzjonali, Clint Micallef minn San Ġwann u Andrea Diacono minn Ħal-Balzan. L-iskop ta' din iż-żjara hu, li mhux biss iżżuru l-postijiet qaddisa marbuta mal-ħajja ta' San Franġisk u Santa Klara, imma bhala grupp wieħed jagħmlu esperjenza ta' talb flimkien fil-kunvent ta' San Damjan.

F'dan is-santwarju, l-istudenti tagħna għamlu s-sena tan-novizzjat u huma (il-grupp) ser ikunu milqugħa minn din il-fraternita ta' formazzjoni. Ser tkun anki ta' okkazzjoni biex iż-żewġ postulanti jaraw minn qabel l-ambjent li fih qed isir in-novizzjat u anki jiltaqgħu mal-aħwa tal-Provinċja Serafika li din is-sena qed jagħmlu s-sena tal-prova.

Fl-1 u t-2 ta' Awissu, jingħaqdu flimkien ma' aħwa u mijiet ohra ta' pellegrini biex jiċcelebraw il-Festa ta' Sidtna Marija, Sultana tal-Anġli u Omm il-Maħfra, il-festa tal-Porziunca.

Wara din il-ġimgħa flimkien, l-istudenti tagħna Fra Walter u Fra Joseph, ser jibqgħu ftit jiem ohra ġewwa Assisi mhux biss biex jerggħu jiltaqgħu ma' sħabhom tan-novizzjat imma wkoll biex jagħmlu Irtir fuq is-sejha saċerdotali bhala għeluq tas-sena franġiskana u qabel jerggħu jibdedw l-istudji fl' Università ta' Malta. Dan ser jitmexxa minn Patri tagħna Olandiz Fra Luke, li għall dawn l-aħħar snin jiffirma parti mill-fraternita ta' San Damjan. Fra Luke, kien għamel anki l-irtir ta' qabel il-professjoni solenni li Fra Pierre Farrugia ofm.

F'dan l-istess żmien numru kbir ta' zġhażagħ mill-Ewropa kollha ser ikunu Assisi fuq il-passi ta' Franġisku.

Dawn l-esperjenzi f'Assisi, huma ta' nvestment li l-Bord tal-Formazzjoni u l-Provinċja qed jagħmlu f'dawn il-kandidati, li huma l-futur tagħna. Grazzi lil benefatturi li jagħmlu possibli dawn l-esperjenzi.

Temporary Profession in Bethlehem

On the feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Custos of the Holy Land, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM received the profession of five new friars. Frère Sergio Galdi (Italy), Frère Ziad Assaf, Frère Jihad Krayem, Frère William Makary (all three from Lebanon) et Frère Ariel Dubé (Argentina) had entered the novitiate last year when they received the habit on Mount Nebo. Having completed the Novitiate year in Bethlehem under the Noviate Director, Noel Muscat, OFM, they made a commitment to the Lord in the Franciscan community in Saint Catherine's Church, adjacent to the Basilica of the Nativity. In his homily, the Father Custos reminded the friars that they were performing *"a free and conscious act of adhering to Christ Crucified, with the commitment to live the Gospel after the manner of Saint Francis, pronouncing vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in order to be witnesses of love, instruments of peace, initiators of encounters, dialog and reconciliation; guardians of Christian hope in the Holy Land of Jesus"*. Referring to the stigmata that Francis bore in his flesh, he said, *"We must live the 'stigmata' of the human condition, all sorts of poverty, the pain of innocents, doubts of the faith, the fatigue of a testimony that is frequently contradicted, ignored or ridiculed."*



GIFRAFEST 2007

'Let his love radiate'

Let his love radiate' kienet it-tema ta' din is-sena tal-GIFRAFEST 2007, festival imtella' mill-GIFRA-Żgħażaġh Franġiskani, Rabat, nhar il-Ġimgħa 14 ta' Settembru għal persuni bi bżonnijiet speċjali u s-Sibt 15 ta' Settembru 2007. Is-serati saru fil-biċċa tal-Każin L'Isle Adam, ir-Rabat. It-tema tal-GIFRAFEST kienet mibnija fuq il-kurċifiss ta' San Damjan. Il-kurċifiss li San Franġisk semgħu jkellmu u dik l-imħabba li ħass fil-kelmiet herġin mis-Salib li lil Franġisku bidluh radikalment.

Il-messaġġ li waslu matul il-festival ta' kant, mużika u drama, kien li bħala grupp li jridu jimxu fuq il-passi ta' San Franġisk, permezz ta' laqgħat u attivitajiet li jorganizzaw b'mod speċjali fis-sala tal-kunvent tar-Rabat, iridu juru din l-istess imħabba li San Franġisk irċieva minghand Ġesu' u li ż-żgħażaġh jirċievu minghand il-patrijiet biex imbagħad jgħadduhom lil



shabhom iż-żgħażaġh li magħhom jiltaqgħu fis-soċjeta' tallum u lil ta' warajhom. Dan il-festival kien frott ta' l-impenn u l-ferħ fit-talenti ta' kull żaġħ-żuġh li ġew espressi fil-kant, mużika u drama.

Voluntarjat mill-GIFRA ĦAMRUN f'Tuneż u l-Etopja

Matul dan is-sajf, 11 il-zaġħżuġh u zaġħżuġha, membri tal-GIFRA Ħamrun marru jaġhmlu esperjenza ta' tlett ġimgħat voluntarjat f'Tunez u mbagħad xi wħud minnhom marru wkoll hames ġimgħat oħra ta' ħidma fi sptar (li kienet skola qabel) immexxi mis-sorijiet tal-Beata Madre Tereża ta' Kalkutta. Ta' min jgħid li dan l-isptar hemm aktar minn 1000 pazjent, hafna minnhom morda bil-lebbra u l-HIV u fih jaġhtu s-servizz fih 15-il soru u tabib wiehed! Matul dan is-sajf iż-żgħażaġh tal-GIFRA mexxew ukoll skola sajj fiċ-Centru San Franġisk u li għaliha attendew 40 adoloxxent.



Il-Ministru Provinċjal mistieden jiehu sehem Malta Day f'Londra

Il-Ministru Provinċjal Fra Paul Galea, OFM ġie mistieden mill-High Commissioner ta' Malta f'Londra, Dr. Michael Refalo biex jiehu sehem fil-Malta Day li ġiet iċċelebrata nhar it-8 ta' Settembru 2007. Il-Ministru Provinċjal mexxa l-quddiesa konċelebrata fil-Kattidral ta' West Minister. Hawn qed nippublikaw l-omelija li huwa għamel għal din l-okkazjoni.

Holy Mary's birthday is the source of great joy to us, because through her birth, God proceeds with his plans of salvation for all men and women of good will.

When God, in the garden of Eden, promised Salvation from original sin through his own Son, He chose the woman through whom the Son of God would take up human nature. So

search our consciences and everyone must answer personally in his or her own heart. How faithful are we towards God's fidelity? How are we corresponding to God's fidelity through a real Christian life? I am sure, that all of us, living in this hectic and secularised world, find it difficult to think much about our faithfulness to God. Our minds are too occupied



My dear Maltese Christians in England,

With all Christians throughout the world, today, the 8th of September, with great joy, we celebrate the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of all human beings.

Mary's birth, is the good sign of hope, because God was keeping up with his promises. We can say that Mary's birth reminds us God's fidelity towards humanity.

Before this God's fidelity, today we must all

about many other things of this world, so that we don't have time left for God.

My brothers and sisters, let us open our minds not to continue to let ourselves be carried away by today's secularized way of life. If we continue to dis-

tance ourselves from God's fidelity in our lives, we would be leading ourselves far away from the real purpose of life. We have enough glaring eye-openers, in the presence of so many social problems like suicides, loneliness, drug addiction, alcoholism, broken marriages and lack of trust in ourselves and in our relations with others.

May Holy Mary, our Mother in heaven, help us to be faithful to God's plans for our life. The celebration of Mary's birth at the present moment in history makes us think not only about the everyday miracle of childbirth but also about the sorrowful experience of unwanted pregnancies and the brutal experience of abortion. Giving birth to a new child is one of the most emotional and most satisfactory experience in a woman's life.

Out of his great love, God himself created us in his likeness with the faculty of reproduction through married love between a husband and his wife. But sin has affected human behaviour in all aspects of life. Because of sin, human life has become a continuous conflict between true love and selfishness. All our behaviour is subject to selfishness. This is something that makes human life and human relations difficult to unfold in true love. Unwanted pregnancies and violent abortions surely uncover a lack of love. That's the reason why Jesus's mission as our Saviour was a continual recall to love God above everything and to love our neighbour as ourselves. May we through

Mary's intercession try to do our best to build our daily life on God's commandment of love.

But for us Maltese, the 8th of September, the birthday of Holy Mary Mother of God, has historical connections with the story of our Nation. Every year on the 8th of September, we Maltese commemorate the Great Siege Victory of 1565 and the Second World War Victory of 1945. Because of these two commemorations, we refer to Holy Mary, as Our Lady of Victories, *il-Vitorja*.

For these reasons, for us Maltese, the Birth of Mary, Mother of God, means not only spiritual victories over evil, but also national victories for liberty and democracy. We commemorate Mary, because it was to her that we turned on both occasions. Today we can apply the intercession of Our Lady of Victories to the daily conflict between our Christian values of life and the common materialistic values.

We all know well that today, as Christians, we are living in a daily conflict, between our Christian values and the liberal values of secular life. This is something that all of us have to struggle against with great faith and consistency because we are facing the power of spiritual evil.

So our presence here in this magnificent Cathedral in the heart of London, signifies not only a commemoration of our brave history as the people of Malta, but above all, our identity and our uniqueness.

It is for this reason that we have come together to celebrate this Holy Eucharist, as a sign of national unity and at the same time as sustenance in our Christian beliefs and values. We all know well, that with today's liberal ideas, both civil and Christian values, are not so easy to maintain. Thanks to our Christian beliefs, as with our forefathers, we can find support in the motherly care of our Holy Mary, Queen of Victories.

Dearly beloved Maltese brothers and sisters living and working here in England, keep yourselves united both in the national spirit and the Christian spirit. In general, the Maltese scattered throughout the world, have always earned a good name for our nation and for our Christian faith. Encourage each other not to succumb to today's liberal ideas. Our national spirit and our Christian values have always been our Maltese strength. May you, through the intercession of our Holy Mother, Mary of Victories, continue to live your particular Maltese Christian identity amidst so much diversity here in England. Together we form part of the Catholic Church in Malta, founded by the Apostle Saint Paul himself. May we all continue to appreciate our Christian faith as a sign of God's love towards our dear Malta, *Din l-Art Helwa*. May our presence here as elsewhere, continue to be a good sign of the Maltese friendly, hardworking, intelligent and Christian character.

L-Apostolat tal-Baħar ifakkar il-konvoy ta' Santa Marija

Fil-Port il-Kbir hdejn id-Dwana l-qadima reġa' ġie mfakkar il-wasla tal-Konvoy ta' Santa Marija magħruf bħala "Operation Pedestal" li ġrat 65 sena ilu. Flotta ta' 15 il-bastiment li minnhom ħamsa biss irnexxielhom jaslu fi xtutna. Din hija organizzata mill-membri ta' l-Apostolat tal-Baħar li l-Kappillan tagħha huwa Fr. Paul Attard OFM li huwa wkoll il-Kappillan tal-Port. Kienet lejla ta' radd il-ħajr 'Alla u lil Ommna Marija li salvaw lil għaziża artna, filwaqt li wrejna għall-darba oħra l-gratitudni tagħna lejn il-qalbiena li tqabdu u ħallew ħajjithom għall-ħelsien ta' l-għaziża ġżiritna.

Il-programm kien varjat b'talb u innijiet. Inqrat il-Poeżija "Erbgħat Iġwiefen" ta' Ġuże' Chetcuti, u l-"Operation Pedestal" bl-Ingliż. Il-qofol ta' ċerimonja ntlahaq bis-salut lill-vittmi ta' l-Aħħar Gwerra Dinjija meta l-istandardi tar-reġimenti tniżżlu hekk kif intefgħu fil-baħar kuruni tal-fjuri minn fuq il-Patrol Boat P24.

Fost il-ħafna mistednin distinti kien hemm Mons. Philip Calleja delegat ta' l-Arcisqof u l-Hon. Tonio Borg Viċi Prim Ministru. Mistiedna speċjali kien hemm Jim Hutchison li kien fuq l-HMS Phoebe, kif ukoll Allan Shaw l-uniku baħri ħaj li kien fuq il-vapur USS tanker Ohio li salva lil



Malta. Allan għandu memorji sbieħ ħafna tal-merħba li tawhom il-Maltin meta l-Konvoy ta' Santa Marija daħal nofsu mgħarraq. Il-ferħ li kien hemm fil-port 65 sena ilu kien emozzjonali. "Il-banda ma' ħdietx iddoqq, filwaqt li l-Maltin kollha bl-imkatar fidejhom ixejjru u jkantaw. Kienet xena li tisraqlek qalbek li nessietna t-tbatija kollha meta mirakolożament wasalna Malta", qalilna Allan kommiss.

Bosta huma dawk li kull sena jgħinuna fl-organizzazzjoni ta' din il-kommemorazzjoni. Izda nuri ħajr speċjali lis-sur Louis Cassar, Chairman ta' l-Apostolat tal-Baħar kif ukoll lis-sur Simon Cusens li kkoordinata x-xogħol flimkien ma' Mons. Philip Calleja li taw kontribut kbir. Filwaqt li niringrazzja lil dawk li

laqgħu l-istedina u attendew bi ħgarhom, nitlob għal kull min tilef ġildu fl-aħħar gwerra dinjija u għal tant oħrajn qalbiena li ddefendewna.

Donazzjonijiet

- Fra Girgor Imbroil, OFM offra d-donazzjoni ta' Can. \$300 għall-ispejjeż ta' L-AĦBAR.
- Fr. Emidio Cremona baġhat is-somma ta' Can.\$1000 b'risq il-fond tal-morda.

Niringrazzjawhom mill-qalb!

XXII Kungress Dinji ta' l-Apostolat tal-Baħar Gdynia-Polonja 2007

Paul Attard, OFM

Iż-żjara tiegħi fil-Polonja f'Ġunju li għadda għal kungress tal-baħħara, żerġhet fija mħabba lejn dan il-poplu ġenwin li tana ospitalita' tal-ġenn. L-awtoritajiet ċivili u marittimi flimkien mal-kmandant tan-Navy Pollakka, in-Nunzju u l-Arcisqof ta' Gdansk tawna merħba meraviljuża bil-banda marittima filwaqt li mmarċajna fit-toroq ta' Gdynia. Kulhadd miexi wara l-bandiera nazzjonali tiegħu fost it-tixjir tan-nies li ħarġu bi ħġarhom fit-toroq u fil-galleriji tagħhom. B'kollox irrapreżentajna 72 pajjiż. Fostna kien hemm 30 Isqof, 292 saċerdot, djakni, reliġjużi, kappillani u voluntiera. Il-Kungress tmexxa mill-Arcisqof Agostino Marchetto, segretarju tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju tal-Kura Pastoral għal Migranti u l-Itineranti (Migrants and Itinerant Peoples). Fostna kellna lil Kardinal Renato Martino li huwa l-president tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju għal Ġustizzja u Paċi.

Il-quddiesja konċelebrata kienet tħallilna ferħ kbir. Dejjem b'lingwi differenti, kant li ma jaqtax, korijiet mill-isbaħ, bil-parteciċipazzjoni tal-baħħara zghazagh kif ukoll baħħara rtirati. Il-jiem kienu mimlija daqs bajda bil-laqgħat u l-'workshops'. Kelliema

mistiedna kienu jinkludu fost l-oħrajn lil David Cockroft, segretarju generali tal-Federazzjoni Internazzjonali tat-Trasport (ITF), Fr. John Chalmers (AOS Awstralja) li tkellem fuq l-enċiklika Deus Caritas Est, Monsinjur Felix Machado (segretarju tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju għad-djalogu inter-reliġjuż, Vatikani), Mons. Pierre Molerés (AOS Franza) li tkellem dwar it-tamiet u l-motivi ta' l-Apostolat tal-Baħar, L-Isqof Rene M Ehouzou (Benin) dwar it-tishiħ u t-tama tal-liturġija bħala parti mportanti fil-ħajja tal-baħħara.

FESTA TA' SAN PIETRU U SAN PAWL

Il-Polonja jiċcelebraw ukoll il-festa ta' San Pietru u San Pawl. Hija tradizzjoni li s-sajjieda kull sena jagħmlu pellegrinagg. Ahna ssehibna magħhom bid-dghajjes. Vjagg ta' tlett siegħat li hadna l-villagg tas-sajjieda fejn sibna jilqgħuna familji sħaħ lebsin ilbies tradizzjonali. F'nofs ta' baħar ġejna milqgħuha minn mijiet ta' dghajjes kbar u zghar kollha armati bnadar kuluriti bil-baned idoqqu marċi tradizzjonali. Ftakart fid-dahla tal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II fil-port ta' Malta b'dawk il-mijiet ta' dghajjes madwaru! Il-messaġġ li bagħtilna l-Papa Benedittu

XVI ġie milqugħ b'applaws kbar meta nqara lilna mill-Kardinal Martino minn fuq waħda mid-dghajjes! Kulhadd ikanta u jdoqq isireni tad-dghajjes!. Minn hemm erħejnielha lejn il-villagg tas-sajjieda li jismu Puck fejn iċcelebrajna quddiesja fil-pjazza. Dak in-nhar il-Kardinal Martino kien qed jiċcelebra l-50 Aniversarju mis-Saċerdozju tiegħu.

LAQĠHA MA' LECH WALENSA

Żjara minnhom ħaditna minn Gdynia għal port importanti ieħor, Gdansk. Hemmhekk kellna sorpriża tistenniena! Kellna laqgħa ma l-ex president Pollakk Lech Walensa. F'diskors twil u mimli emozzjoni kellimna dwar kif beda l-moviment ta' Solidarnosc fis-Shipyard ta' Gdansk fl-1989. Qal li l-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II kien providenzjali fil-waq' tal-komuniżmu fl-Ewropa, tant li l-gvern Pollakk ma kellux triq oħra. Il-Pollakki żammew sħiħ fil-fidi matul il-perjodu komunista.

Matul din iż-żjara fil-Polonja kellna l-opportunita' li nġixu mill-qrib ma dan il-poplu ġenwin u dhuli. Qasmu magħna l-bizat, it-tamiet u l-aspirazzjonijiet biex wasslu fejn wasslu. Huma wkoll kellhom jinfatmu

minn uliedhom li emigraw fartijiet barranin biex jagħmlu fortuna. Ghallmuni biex jien ukoll nilqa' lil ħutna barranin meta jasslu fi xtutna.

F'MALTA

Illum, bħala kappillan tal-port li kull weekend inżur id-dockyard u l-Freeport u niċċelebra l-Ewkaristija fuq il-vapuri nista' nifhem f'it iktar lil ħutna l-baħħara li jhallu artijiethom għal xhur twal biex imantnu lil familji tagħhom. Huwa xogħol li jiswa' mitqllu deheb dak li jagħmel l-Apostolat tal-Baħar. Il-membri lajċi jżuru l-vapuri kull nhar ta' Sibt wara nofs in-nhar sajjf u xitwa. Jistiednu l-kaptan u l-ekwipaġġ għal quddiesa abbord. Jien ilni naghmlu dan l-apostolat 'il fuq minn tlett snin fisem il-provinċja franġiskana. Apostolat li



ilu afdat fidejna mill-1961. biex dan l-apostolat ikun Grazzi wkoll lil Fr.Steno jista' jitwettaq. Fl-deRaffaele S.J. li ilu snin aħharnett, grazzi minn ukoll jagħti s-servizz. Kif qalbi lil Marija, Kewba tal-ukoll grazzi lil membri ko-Baħar lil tassistina u ilha li jagħtu minn ħinhom tmexxina.

Franciscan Retreat

Between Sunday 2nd and 7th September, at the Porziuncola Retreat House in Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, the Secretariat for Formation and Studies, under the coordination of Fr. Marcello Ghirlando OFM, organized a retreat for all the Franciscan friars. The main theme of the retreat was "The Holy spirit" Fr. Marcello animated and conducted the retreat together with Ms Joyce Cassar.

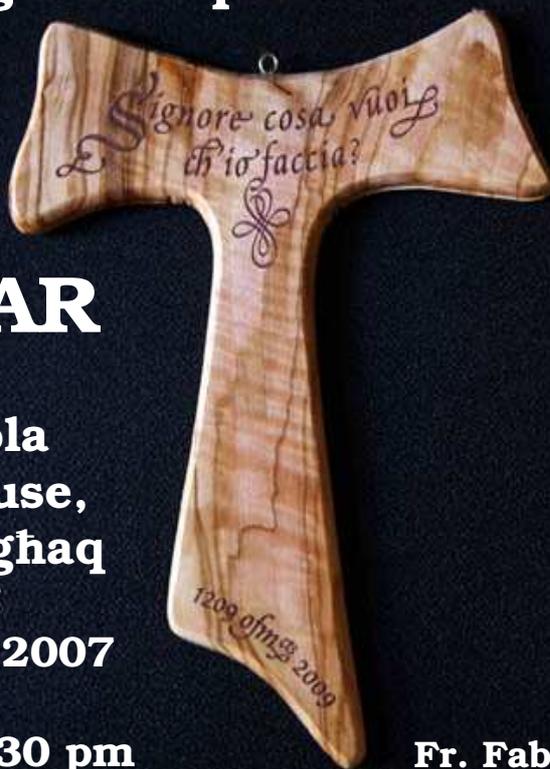
This was the first time which a lay person conducted the retreat in a charismatic style to the Franciscan Fathers. For this retreat was present the Minister Provincial and also some friars, together with the Franciscan Students and Postulants.

These days consisted in conferences, prayer, reflections and sharing the word of God, Eucharistic adoration, and the prayer of the rosary.

There was also the occasion to see the film "Francesco" and afterwards to share a discussion regarding how St. Francis was guided by the Holy spirit. In the middle of the week Mr. Raphael Carabott, a lay person who is part of the Charismatic Movement, shared a personal experience on how he encountered God and how the Holy Spirit worked from within.

The Franciscan Students and the Postulants animated the retreat with songs during the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. Fraternal moments were also strong during meals and recreation in the evening. During the absence of Fr. Julian Sammut, OFM, Fr. Pierre Farrugia, OFM took care of the retreat house. Well done Pierre and the organizers.

Nithejjew għall-Kapitlu Provincjali 2008



SEMINAR

**Porziuncola
Retreat House,
Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq
15-16-17
ta' Novembru 2007**

9.00 am - 12.30 pm

Fr. Fabio Attard, SDB

Il-Ħamis Il-Gimgha Is-Sibt

Galea Benjamin
Aquilina Camillus
Schranz John
Meilak Peter Paul
Camilleri Sebastian
Azzopardi Arthur
Schembri Guido
Vella Anthony
Tonna Ivo
Sant Bernardino
Mintoff Dionysius
Micallef John
Micallef Godfrey
Galea Cherubim
Vella Joseph
Tabone Alfred
Xuereb Joseph Benedict
Tonna Charles
Ellul Vincenti Norbert
Sciberras Alfred
Enriquez Mark

Sciortino Justin
Aquilina George
Camilleri Joseph
Pace Edward
Azzopardi John
Cachia Adrian Joseph
Camilleri Raymond
Galea Paul
Micallef Albert
Caruana Joseph
Borg Alexander
Debono Joseph
Sammut Julian
Micallef Marcellino
Farrugia Christopher
Briffa Anthony
Chircop Anthony
Bugeja George

Grech Richard Stanley
Sciocluna Raymond
Attard Paul
Grech Charles
Ghirlando Marcello
Coleiro Martin
Magro Stephen
Ciantar Mark
Ciantar Leonard
Farrugia Anton
Farrugia Pierre
Zerafa Loreto
Magro Joseph
Farrugia Anton
Zerafa Loreto
Magro Joseph
Ciappara Joseph
Vassallo Walter

*Kull gurnata grupp differenti. Imxejna skond l-eta',
barra dawk li jgħallmu fl-iskejjel.*



FRATERNITAS

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Solemnity of Saint Francis

“Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility” (*Cant.*).

Enjoy the Feast of our Seraphic Father St. Francis!

Humiliter et devote vivere

The Commission for the Service of Dialogue of the Order organised a Seminar about our presence in countries of a Muslim majority at the General Curia from the 18th to the 21st September 2007. 24 Friars from different Entities of the Order participated.

“The franciscan missionary, especially one who lives among Muslims, is he who, on the basis of his adhesion to Christ, gives of himself totally, without reservations or limitations of energies or time; he who gratuitously commits himself; he who lives the logic of gift to the extreme, knowing that nothing belongs to him, that everything is a gift which is received and, therefore, has to be restored; he who constantly goes out of self in order to go to meet the other, the different (cf. *The Lord speaks with us on the road*, 19 - 25). The franciscan missionary, in particular he who lives among the Muslims, is he who, basing his life on the *beatitudes*, opts for dialogue of life, for a presence in frontier areas, giving witness that “there is no one all-powerful, except Him” (*LtOrd 9*)” (*Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General*)

Under 10: Testimony

Let us read one of the testimonies after the meeting of the young “Under 10” Friars in the Holy Land.

“Francis worked and he wanted all his Friars to work. Work is not an end in itself, but finds its meaning in living the Gospel. To see my brothers as men who live the Gospel and not only as Franciscans who work, was a key of understanding for me during the Chapter of Mats of the “Under 10” Friars.

Looking at the franciscan life in this way, ‘work’ is seen as a result of living the Gospel. As the Minister General stressed, the evangelical life is a healthy life. A healthy life or living the Gospel involves the way in which I take care of my body, soul and mind, and what I do in private as well as what I do in public in my daily work. Listening to the efforts and hopes of the Friars in living the Gospel gave me a lot of joy as well as the certainty that I do not walk or make my effort alone.

Wherever we arrived, the Friars of the Custody of the Holy Land received us with an abundant measure of hospitality and courtesy. At the end of the meeting I no longer felt I was a Friar of the Holy Spirit Province in Australia, representative of Asia/Oceania, but I felt united to the Custody of the Holy Land, or to the Province of Colombia, or Austria... as I did to my mother Province.

What pleased me? The places and the sounds, the smells and the bells, the Fraternity and being able to know my brothers from all the Conferences of the franciscan world. What didn't please me? The heat and the linguistic barriers, the brevity of the time and the impossibility of seeing many other holy places and meeting the local people. What pleased and displeased me come together positively in my awareness of the Order and of the way in which we are called to be in the world.

What message will I remember most? Simply this: the evangelical life is a good life and this is what I want to live” (Paul Ghanem, Province of the Holy Spirit of Australia and New Zealand).

Earthquake in Peru

Peru suffered a strong earthquake causing 519 deaths and 1,700 injured on the 15th of August. 70% of the city of Pisco was destroyed. No Friar Minor suffered personal

injury, even though the House of the Province of St. Francis Solano in Ica was seriously damaged. The Friars of both Provinces are engaged in helping the victims of the disaster, especially in the health area, in collaboration with “Missionszentrale der Franziskaner”. At the moment a project is being prepared with the whole Franciscan Family. The Minister General wrote a letter to the Friars and assured them of financial solidarity with projects in favour of the victims. Financial help may be sent to the General Curia, indicating the intention clearly.

Franciscan March 2007

This year also, the COMPI Coordinating committee of animators of the pastoral care of vocations offered young people the experience of the “Franciscan March” on occasion of the Feast of the Porziuncola (25th July to 4th August 2007). The initiative, in its 27th edition, saw about 1,350 young people from all the Provinces of Italy and from some European countries arrive on the 2nd of August. Walking with the Italians were 250 Croats, 50 Austrians and 30 Irish. The theme of the March, “The walk becomes pardon”, was aimed at helping the young to be pilgrims, accompanied by the old but ever-new experience of the exodus of the People of Israel.

The young people were received in the square before the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, in an intense climate of prayer and recollection, by Br. José Carballo, Minister General of the Order, who invited them to allow themselves be touched by the love of God. There was the traditional passage through the Porziuncola in the joy of the meeting with the “Father of mercies” after the prayers of the indulgence. This joy was then expressed in dance and song in the square at the instigation of the animating group of the Umbrian Friars and in which many other people visiting Assisi during those days joined in.

The March also offered another very intense and significant moment of community, a prayer vigil in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels in the late evening of the 3rd of August. The concluding celebration of the whole march was the Eucharist in the morning of the 4th, presided by Br. Renato Delbono, National Coordinator of the Animators of Vocations of COMPI.

Spain – First European Congress of Franciscan Educators

The Conference of Spain and Portugal (CONFRES), in collaboration with the General Secretariat for Evangelisation, will hold the *First European Congress of Franciscan Educators* in the city of Cordoba from the 1st to the 3rd of November 2007. There is a total of 46 study centres in 12 European countries.

The theme proposed is: *800 years of Evangelisation. “Educating Europe with Francis Today”*. The objectives are: a) to know and understand the franciscan educational experience in Europe; b) to analyse the context of young people in Europe today and the challenges to education; and c) to propose educational guidelines on the basis of the franciscan experience.

Those addressed are the Friars engaged in Educational Institutions in Europe, whether in our own centres or in other educational centres, the teachers of our own educational centres and religious of the Franciscan Family in Europe. The Commission is coordinated by Br. Antonio Herrera, of the Betica Province, the Rectors of Colleges of the OFM in Spain and by Br. Joaquín A. Echeverry, Animator for Educational Pastoral Activity in the Order. Further information can be found on the web site:

<http://www.congresoeducadoresfranciscanos.org>

Francis, Europe and young people

“Go, dear young people, along the roads of Europe and, with tightened belt and lamps lit, tell of what you have seen and heard. Tell of how, in the city of Assisi 800 years ago, there lived a young man called Francis and a young woman called Clare: two impassioned hearts who allowed themselves to be conquered by Christ and found the full meaning of life by giving themselves without reservations to the love of their life, Jesus Christ, in the radical following of the Lord and in the service of the least of men and of the excluded of that time. Go, and fearlessly invite others to do likewise”.

The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. José Rodríguez Carballo,

wished to greet the very many young people who had come to Assisi to celebrate the *European franciscan meeting* with these words, said during the concluding Eucharist in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. The meeting, organised by the Union of Friars Minor in Europe (UFME - *Unio Fratrum Minorum Europae*), was held from the 7th to the 12th of August 2007.

National groups from 19 European countries: Austria, Germany, Holland, France, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, Great Britain, Ireland, Lithuania, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Portugal, Spain and Italy, attended.

The next *European franciscan meeting* will be in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in 2009. www.assisi2007.org

World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, on 15th to 20th July

The government of the Holy Spirit Province in Australia is encouraging all the Friars, and groups, who are thinking of participating in the WYD, to take part also in the International Meeting of Young Franciscans which will take place a week before the official events in Sydney. All the pilgrims should enter Australia via Brisbane, where there will be a gathering place.

The Friars manage the Padua College, a high-school for boys in Kedron, a suburb of Brisbane; close by there is Mount Alvernia, a high-school for girls, managed by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. The activities of Brisbane will be concentrated around these buildings in Kedron and will be prepared in common with the events of "Days in the Diocese" organised by the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The meeting will provide international oratories, a live concert and a cultural festival, some direct contact with Australian nature and many other things. The cost of the event will be reduced to the minimum and the journey to Sydney will have to be organised by the individual groups which participate. If you are thinking of participating in WYD08 and wish to join the Friars from all over the world, visit the web site: www.franciscans.org.au/wyd. Or contact Br. Paul Ghanem wyd08@franciscans.org.au, or Ben Galea wyd08_syd@franciscans.org.au, or Caitlin King wyd08_bne@franciscans.org.au; The official site of WYD08 is: www.wyd2008.org

Big/small news

Friday 26th October, Rome – The School of Higher Medieval and Franciscan Studies - Pontifical University Antonianum, 15.30: a study seminar on *Palaeography, philology and history at the service of Thomas of Celano: the Umbrian legend*. A study meeting on the critical edition of JACQUES DALARUN, *Vers une résolution de la question franciscaine. La Légende ombrienne de Thomas de Celano*, Fayard, Paris 2007. Interventions by Giulia Barone, Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Giovanni Miccoli, Carlo Paolazzi. J. Dalarun will be present. Further information at: www.antonianum.eu/medieval.htm.

Saturday 10th November 2007, Monastery of Saint Lucy in Foligno (Italy) – in collaboration with the School of Higher Medieval and Franciscan Studies of the *Pontifical University Antonianum* in Rome – is organising a day of study on **Humanism and the Poor Clares of the Observance**. Intervention by Cécile Caby, Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Patrizia Bertini Malgarini, Ugo Vignuzzi, André Vauchez. Further information at: antonianumsssmf@ofm.org; or www.antonianum.ofm.org.

Revision of the present structures of the "St. Bonaventure" College in Grottaferrata: An International Commission for the study and revision of the present structures of St. Bonaventure's College in Grottaferrata (to be located in St. Isidore's College next year) and, in particular, for a greater preparation of the Historical Department for the study of modern and contemporary history of the Order, was established by a letter of the Minister General on the 31st of July 2007 (Prot. 098138), following a decision of the General Definitory.

The members of the Commission are: Br. Massimo Fusarelli: Secretary General

for Formation and Studies (President); Br. Giuseppe Buffon, Professor of Church History at the P.U.A.; Br. Michael Cusato, "Sacred Heart" Province in the U.S.A., Director of the "Franciscan Institute" at St. Bonaventure's University (USA); Br. Benedikt Mertens, Fulda Province in Germany, doctor in Church History; Br. Francisco Morales, Holy Gospel Province in Mexico, historian and librarian; Br. Pacifico Sella, Venetian Province of St. Anthony in Italy, a scholar at St. Bonaventure's College in Grottaferrata and Director of the Historical Department and of the AFH Review.

Professions in the Foundation of Russia-Kazakhstan: The Minister General received the first profession of two Friars from the Foundation of Russia-Kazakhstan, Br. Vitale and Br. Valerio, on the 1st of September. This brings the number of Friars in temporary profession in the Foundation to 4.

Franciscan Bookmark

Santa Filippa Mareri, under the care of Alvaro Cacciotti and Maria Melli, Biblioteca di Frate Francesco – 3, Editrici Francescane, pp. 184.

Filippa Mareri is an interesting figure in the area of spiritual and hagiographical history linked to the upsurge of the female franciscan movement during the twenties and thirties of the XIII century.

In the four accounts of these Acts, followed by an iconographic appendix, the cult and canonisation, the relationship with Clare and the Damianites of the Monastery of Borgo San Pietro, Rieti Valley (Italy) and of how *franciscan* Filippa was, are discussed. (See: <http://www.fratilazio.it/cultura/bibliotecadifratefrancesco.html>)

Ikona św. Klary, Sergiusz M. Bałdyga OFM, Franciszkańskie Wydawnictwo św. Antoniego, Wrocław 2007, pp. 28.

This new publication about St. Clare of Assisi, in Polish, has its starting point in the famous icon of the saint, painted about 30 years after her death, preserved in the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi. The author, through a reading of the icon and in a few pages, leads the reader through the history of the life and vocation of the "little plant of St. Francis", allowing him not only to approach the person of St. Clare, but also to draw from her supernatural gift of contemplation. In addition, he teaches the reader, through his brief and profound reflections, to discover the will of God in the Spirit of the Lord.

La conversation et Les écoutes difficiles (*Difficult conversations and listening*), Bernard Forthomme, Édit. Franciscaines, Paris 2007. The book is the result of carrying out difficult conversations during "therapy" and is born of the urgent need for the re-appropriation of confrontation, not only in psychiatric care, but also in everyday life with its lights and shadows.

Conversation is an essential way of speaking of our efforts at human relations, wavering in life, and of the small difficulties present in the life of each one of us.

The author transcribes his experience of the more subtle and insinuating aspects of conversation in order to stimulate and encourage a clearer perception of the favourable moments of interactive dialogue in our life.

Enchiridion of the Order of Friars Minor. Documents of 1966-1989, I, Edizione L.I.E.F., Vicenza 2007, pp. XX+1079. The First Volume of the Enchiridion OFM, with the Documents of the Order, or regarding the Order, from 1966 to 1989, has been issued under the aegis of the Communications Office of the General Curia. The other volumes, three are scheduled, will contain the documents from 1990 to 2006.

The aim is to facilitate, in a practical way, the knowledge of the progress the Order of Friars Minor has made from the II Vatican Council to today. It is a journey which forms part of our *memory* and roots, but which is still able to help us to live our vocation and mission with the hope of transmitting it, still fascinating, to all those who wish to embrace the *forma vitae* of Francis of Assisi.

New Ministers Provincial

Br. Dobrosław Kopysterynski was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St.

Michael Archangel (Ukraine).

Br. Dennis Vavrek was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of Christ the King (Canada).

Br. Emmanuel Musara was elected Custos of the Custody of “The Good Shepherd” in Zimbabwe.

New Visitators General

Br. Javier Gómez Jiménez, Province of Blessed Junípero Serra, Mexico, for the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Central America and Panama.

Br. Fedele Pradella, Province of St. Bonaventure in Piedmont, Italy, for the Province of St. Mary of Graces in Sardinia, Italy.

Br. José Maria Moreira Pereira Faria, Province of the Holy Martyrs of Morocco, Portugal, for the Autonomous Custody of St. Clare of Assisi, Mozambique.

Br. Luigi Giacometti, Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy, for the Province of The Most Holy Name of Jesus, Sicily, Italy.

Br. Aldo La Neve, Roman Province of the Apostles Peter and Paul, Italy, for the Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy.

Br. Phillip Miscamble, Province of the Holy Spirit, Australia and New Zealand, for the Custody of St. Francis of Assisi, Papua New Guinea.

Br. Aidan McGrath, Province of Ireland, for the Province of Our Lady Queen of Peace, South Africa.

Agenda of the Minister General

03 October: Participation in the Chapter of the Immaculate Conception Province (USA) in Assisi. Celebration of the Transitus of our Father St. Francis (Assisi).

04 October: Solemnity of St. Francis in Assisi.

05-06 October: Meeting with the Friars of the South Slavic Conference in initial formation.

07-09 October: Visit to the Assumption of the BVM Province (Mostar-Bosnia-Herzegovina).

10-13 October: Participation in UFME (Sarajevo-Bosnia-Herzegovina).

14 October: Opening of the International Congress on Ongoing Formation in Assisi.

15-18 October: Visit to the St. John the Baptist Province (Cincinnati – USA).

19 October: Inauguration of the academic year at the PUA, Rome.

21-22 October: The erection of the new Province in Austria (“St. Leopold”).

23-24 October: Visit to the Province of Murcia (Spain).

27-28 October: Participation in and the conclusion of the International Congress on Ongoing Formation in Assisi.

The Year 2007: Let us dare to live the Gospel!

We live in a world “torn apart by fragmentations and divisions” and often, instead of being engaged in constructing dialogue as the first way of evangelising in our globalised world, we have difficulty even in having relationships between ourselves. There is no shortage of fraternities in which the members live “separated in the house”, as “consumers” of fraternity rather than as “builders” of fraternity.

Filled with a mundane spirit which has invaded our houses, we no longer know how to be together gratuitously; we no longer know how to pray together, not even for one hour a day; we no longer know how to create a space for dialogue because “we have no time or do not want to waste time”. We also run the risk of basing our life on the value of individualistic and self-centred efficiency of the secularised world rather than on the Gospel, Rule or General Constitutions. We know, in theory, the value of fraternity is the proclamation of the Kingdom in our midst and is, therefore, the first announcement of the Good News, especially if we consider the internationality of our fraternities. Often, rather than living the Kingdom, we are engaged in constructing “our own kingdom”! Not to find time for God or for our brothers and not to put them at the centre of our life means refusing to live our vocation and mission. Where can we place things if we have no theocentric life? How can we be consistent with what we professed? What can we announce, teach and proclaim?

FRATERNITAS - OFM – Rome

Director responsible: Gino Concetti - Redactor: Robert Bahčič

Internet: <http://www.ofm.org/fraternitas>. Email: rbahcic@ofm.org

Franciscans 70 years in Korea to restore primate of the spirit and serve the poor

(Agenzia Fides)

Seoul-To give a soul to Korea's secularised society, pervaded by new technology which often dehumanises inter-personal relations: this is the vocation and mission of the Franciscans who recently celebrated 70 years of presence in this country, evangelising in poverty and simplicity in keeping with the life of their founder St Francis of Assisi.

From the beginning the Franciscan presence in Korea has been eminently spiritual activity teaching to give first place to "things of heaven", relationship with God, often penalised in societies of consumerism and efficiency: through catechesis, celebration of the Sacraments (Confession especially), organisation of retreats and days of reflection.

Besides spiritual direction for many faithful and families, priests and sisters, the Franciscans have not neglected evangelisation, works of social assistance as a video made for the 70th anniversary shows. Friars and lay people are seen at work caring for lepers, serving disabled people, working in homes for poor and abandoned people, ever more numerous in Korea today.

The first two Franciscans who came to Korea



from Canada arrived in 1937 and the first local Franciscan community was opened in Daejeon in 1938. Twenty years later the friars founded a home for people with leprosy 300 km south of Seoul in the province of Gyeongsangnam, which they still run and where today they care for over 200 patients.

The friars gradually grew in numbers thanks to local vocations and in 1987 the Order of Friars Minor created the Franciscan Korean Province which has today 150 religious and has contributed to mission ad gentes sending friars to China, Israel, Japan, Russia and Kazakhstan. Franciscans here have begun another area of mission: spiritual care and evangelisation among immigrants (many from the Phil-

ippines), an ever larger part of Korean society, with problems of cultural adaptation, logistic accommodation and spiritual direction.

**Fid-Dar tal-Kleru
nghaqad ukoll
Ġuzepp Beneditt
Xuereb, OFM.
Hemm ukoll
Charles Wickman,
Arthur Azzopradi,
OFM, Guido
Schembri, OFM.
Il-Little Sisters of
the Poor hemm
Ġwann Schranz,
OFM.
Inżuruhom u
nitolbu għalihom.**

KAPITLU PROVINĊJALI 2008



SEMINAR

*Porziuncola Retreat
 House, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq*

ara pagna

FESTI U BIRTHDAYS

OTTUBRU

2 Fra Angelo Falzon	7 Fra Ġwann Azzopardi
9 Fra Dijonisju Mintoff	15 Fra Angelo Falzon
13 Fra Edward Zammit	16 Fra Alexander Borg
13 Fra Eddie Pace	18 Fra Joe Caruana
23 Fra Ġwann Micallef	22 Fra Anton Farrugia
26 Fra Alfred Tabone	28 Fra Richard S. Grech
26 Fra Alfred Sciberras	

NOVEMBRU

11 Fra Martin Coleiro	01 Fra Stephen Sciberras
15 Fra Albert Micallef	09 Fra Martin Coleiro
26 Fra Leo M. Ciantar	14 Fra Julian Sammut
	17 Fra Christopher Farrugia
	18 Fra Victor Camilleri
	19 Fra Ivo Tonna
	28 Fra Ġwann Schranz

Awguri u Xewqat Sbieħ!

F' DIN IL-HARĠA

Ottubru 2007

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L-AHĦBAR

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