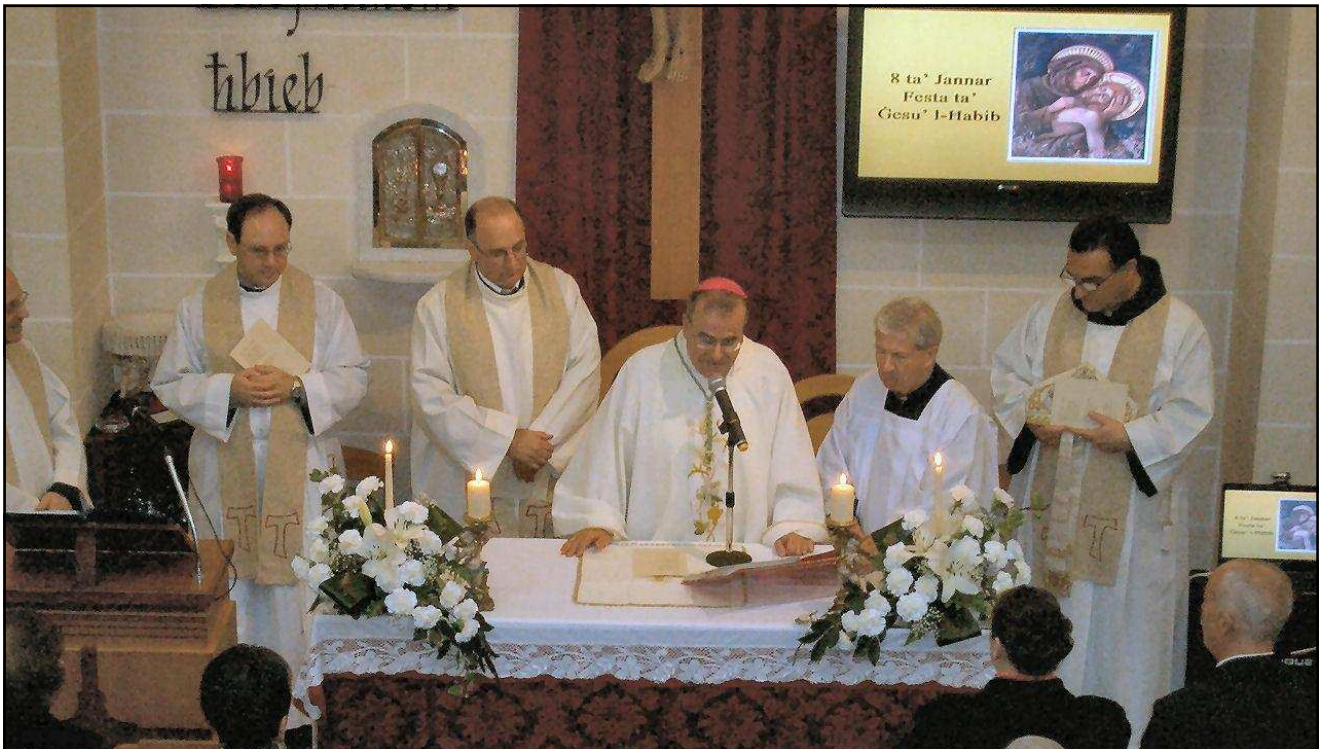


L-AHBAR



PROVINĊJA FRANĠISKANA TA' SAN PAWL APPOSTLU, MALTA. No. 131 1. 2. 2008



Ritratt fuq: Mons. Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona, O.P. iqaddes fiċ-Ċentru Pastorali Ġesu' Habib.

Ritratt isfel: Il-President ta' l-Amerika George W. Bush mal-patrijiet franġiskani f'Betlehem.



Cardinal Hummes, OFM

Priests Need Prayers

Prefect Explains Spiritual-Motherhood Initiative

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 8, 2008 - Priests aren't perfect, and they need help to live their vocation and mission in today's world, says the prefect of the Congregation for Clergy.

Cardinal Cláudio Hummes said this in comments to L'Osservatore Romano about the initiative launched by his dicastery Dec. 8 to promote perpetual Eucharistic adoration and spiritual motherhood to support priests.

Cardinal Hummes said in Saturday's edition of the Vatican newspaper that priests have never been perfect "because we are all sinners," but that "recently, very serious facts have been reported." But, he affirmed, less than 1% of priests are unfaithful to their commitment of celibacy.

Still, he said, all priests need "spiritual help in order to live their own vocation and mission in today's world."

"We have proposed to bishops that they promote in their dioceses authentic 'cenacles' in which consecrated and laity are dedicated -- united in a spirit of true communion -- to prayer in the form of continuous Eucharistic adoration," the cardinal explained.

The objective is that "from every corner of the earth, prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, praise, petition and reparation will always be lifted to God -- an incessant prayer in order to raise up a sufficient number of holy vocations to the priesthood, and together with this, to accompany them spiritually, with a type of spiritual motherhood," he added.

Mary's example

Cardinal Hummes, 73, stated that women religious have a special role to play in aiding priests: "Following the example of Mary, feminine consecrated souls can spiritually adopt priests to help them with their surrender, prayer and penance."

The cardinal contended that the vocation to be a spiritual mother of priests is "too little known, barely understood, and because of this, rarely lived, in spite of its fundamental and vital importance."

"Regardless of age and marital status, all women can become spiritual mothers for a priest," he explained. He said the commitment implies praying "for a specific priest and thus accompanying him for life," usually anonymously.

Cardinal Hummes added, "This, as history tells us, produces great spiritual fruits for priests" who "spend their whole life, even with their limits, for God and for their neighbor [...] preaching and cultivating the good, helping people."

In a society in which the predominant culture is "very critical of" religion, and frequently acts "as if faith was disappearing," the cardinal affirmed that all Christians are called to pray for their ministers, conscious that priests "are the greatest benefactors of humanity."



Congr. Min. et Cust. recenter electorum

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, ofm - Minister General

1Sam 16, 1-13; Ps 88, 20-22.27-28; Mk 2, 23-28

Dear Brother Ministers; May the Lord give you peace. We have shared some reflections on the ministry to which you have been called as Ministers and Custodes during these days. We have also shared our unease, hopes, doubts, fears, joys and worries. They have been days of meeting others and of real fraternity. For this we give thanks to God, the giver of ever good gift. We now place all that we have reflected on and shared on the altar so that the Lord may change our fears, frailties and weaknesses into evangelical strength, courage and audacity and may, at the same time, reinforce all the good there is in us, in our entities and in the Friars who have been entrusted to us.

Important indications for our ministry of service to the Friars come to us from the readings the Churches proposes to us today. First of all, whoever has been called to exercise the ministry of authority must place himself totally at the service of the will of the Lord. The Minister, like Francis, has to ask himself constantly: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" and, like Samuel, the Minister or Custos must do what the Lord orders him to do (cf. 1Sam 16, 4). T

his will not save him from fear, Samuel himself felt fear (cf. 1Sam 16, 2). It will not free him from questioning, as in the case of Mary (cf. Lk 1, 29). But obeying the will of the Lord,

always and at every moment, has to be the prime objective of his life. The Minister or Custos has to be able to say, as Peter did, that we must obey God rather than men (cf. Acts 4, 19).

This attitude of obedience to the project of God will give great freedom and serenity to the Ministers and Custodes in their ministry (cf. Adm 7, 14). The fear of certain situations, conflicts and difficulties will be overcome by the certainty, which comes only from faith, that the hand of the Lord supports His servant, as we said in the Responsorial Psalm (cf. Ps 88, 20-22. 27-28).

Only in this way will the Minister have the clarity needed for the analysis and diagnosis of the situation and the audacity to live and to encourage others to live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope. Only in this way will he be able to have a vision different to that of others, God's vision of both events and people. The Minister, like Samuel, cannot have a merely human, superficial view, or allow himself to be taken in by appearances. "My ways are not your ways" (Is 55, 8). My criteria are not your criteria, the Lord clearly says to Samuel, and to us. "God does not see as man sees: man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart" (1Sam 16, 7). The Minister, in full communion with the Lord,

has to learn how to look, with the eyes of God, into the depths, into the heart, where evil and goodness really lie (cf. Mt 15, 11ff). This will lead him to acting according to the criteria of God and not according to human criteria.

Another important indication for our ministry which comes from the readings of today is that of the need to put love before any other "mediation", not matter how important it may be, such as the law. The Minister and Custos, in their mission of governance, have to keep the law in mind and to have it respected, but this can never substitute for the law of love, forgiveness and mercy, without which the mission of animation entrusted to them is impossible. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath", we heard proclaimed in the Gospel (Mk 2, 28). Giving priority to the law of love may seem less efficient, but, however, it is the only one which changes the heart in the long run. Let no one, then, leave your presence, dear Ministers and Custodes, without having contemplated, through you, the merciful face of God. Let no one leave your presence without having received mercy if he has asked for it, or without you having offered it if he has not asked for it, as our Father St. Francis asks of us in his Letter to a Minister. Do not be afraid to forgive. Pardon alone works the miracle of a double

conversion: that of the one pardoned and that of the one who forgives.

Following the process proposed by the project The grace of our origins, elaborated by the General Definitory for the celebration of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of our Order, we have arrived at the third stage: To celebrate and make restitution to God of the gift of our vocation. We, at this time of grace, feel the need to celebrate, that is: to have a festival, because the Lord has been good to us, calling us to form part of the family of Friars Minor, and, therefore, we are happy. To celebrate, that is to say: renew our amazement, our wonder and our surprise at this extraordinary gesture of love by the Lord to each one of us when, without any merit on our part: He said to us: Follow me. Celebrate, that is: to thank the Lord for the gift of our vocation, that wonderful gift "for which we must express the deepest thanks to our glorious God" (TestCl 2). To celebrate, that is: to renew, in each one of us, the joy of belonging to Him who is all our richness

to sufficiency (cf. PrsG 4). To celebrate, that is: to restore, give back, to the world, to the Church and to the Friars all that we have received from the Lord by living generously, in words and deeds, the demands of our vocation.

Having placed ourselves in an attitude of discernment during 2006; and having reflected on the central place the Gospel has in our life as Friars Minor during 2007, now, in 2008-2009, we are asked to give a concrete response, as individuals and as a community, to this process of seeking the will of the Lord for each and every one of the Friars, so that, returning to the essential of our form of life (cf. LgP 2), we may be better able to respond to the challenges which society, the Church and the world present to us today and, in this way, "be born again" (Jn 3, 3). We are asked to take advantage of this time of grace to face up to our *forma vitae* in "creative fidelity" (VC 37); to give a significant response to the vocation and mission we received, without "domesticating the prophetic words of the Gospel in order

to accommodate them to a comfortable style of life" (LgP 2). We are called to conversion (cf. Mk 1, 14).

The project The Grace of our Origins proposes some practical activities for this process, which we cannot afford not to keep in mind: To seek practical ways of expropriation and of restitution of our goods to the poor, who are our masters and lords; to check out the use of spaces in every local fraternity and to seek ways to carry out options of solidarity and generosity in sharing; to evaluate the use we make of the means for evangelisation, to see if they are really in harmony with our vocation to be minors; to make an option for evangelisation in a missionary key; to take up again the formula of profession so that it may be an occasion for making a grateful memorial of the gift of vocation, a review of life and a renewed commitment.

Brothers: This is the process we are called on to carry out during these two years ahead. Let us open up to the Spirit as we pray:

Lord Jesus, our custodian and defender,
fill our hearts with your grace,
so that we will not give in to the temptation of tiredness, routine and resignation.

Lord Jesus, our hope,
transform our hearts,
so that we may enjoy, celebrate and "make restitution of" the gift of our vocation.

Lord Jesus, our refreshment,
give us the gifts of Your Spirit
and the generosity to share them with the Friars, the Church and the poor.

Lord Jesus, our riches to sufficiency,
enlighten our hearts
so that we may walk with "light step" towards the grace of our origins.

Lord Jesus, our gladness and joy,
purify us interiorly,
so that, inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, we may follow Your footprints.

Fiat, fiat. Amen, Amen.

What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?

George Eliot

Communication from the General Definitory - January

“Tempo Forte” - January 2008

The “Tempo Forte” of January 2008 was held from the 7th to the 22nd. As is now customary, the meeting of the government of the Order with the Ministers and Custodes elected during 2007, twenty in number, was included and ran from the 14th to the 22nd. The Definitory participated in the “laudatio” in honour of Cardinal Umberto Betti in the PUA, given in the morning of the 16th January. In addition to the usual matters dealt with, some specific topics in particular were studied deeply: the aid booklet on Chapter IV of the GGCC; the aid booklet on Ongoing Formation; the aid booklet on Parishes; the present situation of Dependent Custodies; the “Year of the Word” 2008; the meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences in May 2008; and the meeting of the Presidents of the Poor Clare Federations (St. Mary of the Angels, 26th January to 6th February 2008).

1. Reports

The Report sent by Br. Theo Vergeel, Visitor General, who just concluded his service in the Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, was studied and assessed. The Definitory accepted the decision of the Chapter of the said Province to have

the Custody of St. Francis in West Papua, dependent on it, made an Autonomous Custody. The steps to be taken, including the date of the erection, have still to be established.

The Definitory, having listened to the Visitor General to the Foundation of St. Francis of Assisi in Russia-Kazakhstan, dependent on the Minister General, and to the views of the members of the Foundation regarding the new government, appointed the new President, Br. Guido Trezzani, and the three Councillors of the said Foundation.

2. New Secretary General

The Definitory elected Br. Ernest Karol Siekierka (the Province of St. Francis of Assisi, in Poland) as the new Secretary General of the Order, the Office being vacant since the death of Br. Seán Collins, who died on the 24th of December 2007 following a short and painful illness.

3. General Chapter 2009

The Definitory met with Br. Francesco Patton, Secretary General of the 2009 General Chapter, and planned some steps to be taken in preparation for the Chapter. The day dedicated to the theme of the Chapter, scheduled to be held during the meeting of

the Presidents of the Conference in May 2008, was prepared in conjunction with the Secretary General of the Chapter. Br. Walter de Carvalho Junior, of the Immaculate Conception Province in Brazil, and Br. Gabriel Matthias, of the Province of St. Thomas in India, were appointed Vice-Secretaries of the General Chapter. Br. Giampaolo Masotti, of the Seraphic Province, was appointed to the Secretariat to be in charge of communications. The Preparatory Commission of the General Chapter was also appointed and is composed of the following Friars.: Br. Francesco Patton (Secretary and Coordinator), Br. Ambrogio Nguyen Van Si (General Definitory), Br. Walter de Carvalho Junior (Vice-Secretary) and Br. Damien Isabell (of the Missionary Centre in Brussels). Br. Jakab Varnai (General Definitory), and Br. Francesco Patton (Secretary) form the Commission for the revision of the Ordo Capituli.

4. College of St. Isidore in Rome

Having decided to transfer the Fraternity of Grottaferrata (College of St. Bonaventure-Quaracchi) to Rome (College of St. Isidore), the Definitory formed the new religious

ikompli fpaġna 7

Il-Ħames Difetti f'Ġesu' Kristu

Francois Nguyen Van Thuan

Id-difetti huma skond il-logika tal-bniedem, għax Ġesu' huwa Alla ta' perfezzjoni bla qies. Din hija meditazzjoni li l-Kardinal Francois Nguyen Van Thuan għamel lil Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II fit-18 ta' Marzu 2000, mehuda mill-ktieb tiegħu: "Testimony of Hope".

Introduzzjoni:

Matul il-prigunerija tiegħi, shabi l-ħabsin kienu jsaqsuni: "Għaliex int ħallejt il-familja, ix-xogħol, il-karriera... biex mort wara Kristu? Jaqaw int iffissat?" Kont nirrispondihom: "Jien nagħmel kollox għal Ġesu'". Kienu jkomplu jistaqsuni: "Imma min hu dan Ġesu'? Dan xi superstizzjoni?... xi invenzjoni tal-moħħ?"

Għalhekk jien kont infissrilhom bi kliem sempliċi l-għala jien sirt inħobb lil Ġesu'. Kont ngħidilhom: "Jiena nħobb ferm lil Ġesu' għax nammira fih id-"difetti" illi għandu. Imma tifhmunix ħażin; għax inkella nkun qed ngħid ereżija".

L-Ewwel "Difett" f'Ġesu': Jien inħobb lil Ġesu' għax huwa m'għandux memorja tajba.

Ara l-halliel it-tajjed. Huwa ħares lejn Ġesu' u talbu: "Ġesu', ftakar f'ija meta inti tidhol fis-saltna tiegħek". Ġesu' ma qallux: "Żomm: imma qabelxejn 20 sena purgatorju halli tpatti għal dñubietek l-imghoddija". Le! It-twegiba ta' Ġesu' kienet sempliċi. "Illum tkun il-Ġenna miegħi". Stramba, veru? Imma din hija l-aħbar tajba ta' Ġesu'. Huwa jobgħod id-dñub iżda jħobb il-midneb. Huwa malajr jinsa d-dñubiet kollha li għaddew.

Bl-istess mod Huwa ħafer lil mara adultera (Lq 7:47). "Dñubietek maħfura għax int ħabbejt ħafna". U anki fil-parabbola ta' l-iben il-ħali (Lq 15:11): "Ha nieklu u nagħmlu festa, għax dan ibni kien mejjet u raġa' qam, kien mitluf u nstab!". X'persuna meraviljuża hu Ġesu'. Huwa mhux biss jaħfer, imma wkoll jinsa! Tassew għani fil-ħniena!

It-Tieni "Difett" f'Ġesu': Ġesu' mhux tajjed fil-matematika.

L-AĦBAR FRAR 2008

Kieku Ġesu' kellu joqgħod għall-eżami tal-B.Com (Batchelor of Commerce), żgur ma kienx jgħaddi. Aqra l-parabbola tan-nagħġa l-mitlufa (Lq 15).

Wieħed raġel kellu mitt nagħġa. Waħda minnhom intilfitlu. Telaq id-disgħa u disgħin u mar ifittex dik il-waħda. U meta sabha, feraħ biha u refgħaha fuq spallejha. Għal Ġesu' waħda hija ekwivalenti għal 99. Min jammetti dan? Imma Ġesu' hekk jifhimha. Aħna naħsbuha xort'oħra. Il-ħniena ta' Ġesu' hija infinita.

It-Tielet "Difett" f'Ġesu': Jien inħobb lil Ġesu' għax Hu ma jemminx fil-logika.

Ha nispijega. Mara kellha għaxar drakmiet u tilfet waħda minnhom (Lq 15: 8-10). Tixgħel il-musbieħ, tiknes id-dar u meta ssibha, issejjah għandha lil ħbiebha u l-girien, u tgħidilhom, 'Ifirhu miegħi, għax sibt id-drakma li kienet intilfitli'. Tassew kontra l-logika li toqgħod taqla' l-girien u l-ħbieb għal festa għax kienet sabet id-drakma. Żgur li nefqet wisq aktar flus minn dak li kienet sabet! Ġesu' ma jimxix bil-logika tagħna. Aħna naħsbu bil-logika ta' moħħ. Ġesu' bil-logika tal-qalb. "Ngħidilkom jien, li l-istess ferħ ikun hemm fost l-anġli ta' Alla għal midneb wieħed li jindem".

Ir-Raba' "Difett" f'Ġesu': Ġesu' ma jħobbx il-pubblicita'.

Dawk li jaħdmu fil-qasam tar-reklami jafu li meta xxandar għandek twieġhed, twieġhed u twieġhed. Aktar ma tkun kbira l-gidba, aktar titwemmen! Aħna ninsabu f'dinja ta' pubblicita' bla ma taqta'. Inħossuna maħkumin mir-reklami li jwiegħduna affarijiet sbieħ, li ma jispiċċawx malajr. Ħafna wiegħdied fiergħa. Ġesu' ma jimxix hekk magħna; ma jħobbx il-popolarita' li toffri d-dinja. Huwa sinċier u ġenwin għall-aħħar. Lil dawk li jimxu warajh, ma jwiegħdhomx ħajja komda. Huwa jwiegħed provi u persekuzzjonijiet. "Qiegħed nibgħatkom bħal ħrief qalb l-ilpup... Iressqukom quddiem qrati,

6

jghajjrukom u jippersegwitawkom”.

F'Mattew 8:20, wiehed skriba resaq fuqu u qallu: “Mghallem, tmur fejn tmur, jiena niġi warajk”. Ġesu' dritt wiegħbu: “Il-volpijiet għandhom l-għerien tagħhom u l-għasafar tas-sema l-bejtiet, iżda Bin il-Bniedem ma għandux fejn imidd rasu”.

Imma ħafna mid-dixxipli afdaw lil dan l-Aventurier u mxew warajh. Tul issekli ħafna nies qaddisa irriskjaw ħajjithom għalih, għax Ġesu', li jhallas bil-mija fil-wiehed, qatt ma jfalli. Huwa dejjem fl-agunija u frattant dejjem jerga jqum.

Il-Ħames “Difett” f'Ġesu': Ġesu' mhux espert fil-finanzi u l-ekonomija.

Jekk b'ipotesi, Ġesu' kellu jkun direttur ta' kumpannija industrijali, jew xi akkawtant, żgur li dik il-kumpannija tmur lura. Kif jista' jkun, tati paga ta' ġurnata lil min ikun daħal fil-5 ta' fil-għaxija, bħal dawk li jkunu bdew minn fil-għodu kmieni? Sewwa li kumpannija thallas paga sħiħa lil min jaħdem siegħa biss? Dan żball? Le, Ġesu' għamel hekk apposta. Huwa ġeneruż bil-bosta u ried jagħti paga sħiħa.

Imma għaliex Ġesu' għandu dawn id-“difetti”? Għax Alla Hu IMHABBA (Ġw.4:16). L-imħabba ta' Ġesu' hi mogħtija b'xejn, b'mod infinit u bla qies. San Pawl jgħid li hadd ma jista' jkejjel it-tul, il-wisgħa, l-għoli u l-fond ta' l-imħabba t'Alla. L-imħabba vera ma toqgħodx tqis, ma tiftakarx fil-ħtijiet, ma tagħmilx kundizzjonijiet. Hija mħabba mogħtija mill-qalb u b'xejn. Ġesu' jagħti kollox u ma jippretendi xejn. Imħabbtu hi bla tmiem, il-providenza tiegħu ma taqta' qatt. L-imħabba tiegħu għalina thawwadna fil-kalkoli umani tagħna għax imħabbtu mhix bil-kejl.

Għeluq:

Meta jiena nahseb f'imħabbtu, ruhi nħossha tfur bil-ferħ. Żgur li l-Mulej għad jilqgħani mbissew fi hdanu bħala s-serv tiegħu umli u fidil. Nixtieq ferm nara 'l wiċċu. Iva, jien irrid inkun wiċċ-imbiwiċċ miegħu bis-saħħa ta' dawn id-“difetti” meraviljużi illi għandu.

ikompli minn paġna 5

family of the latter College which is dependent on the Minister General.

5. Meeting with the Offices

The Definitory met the Director of the Development Office (Fund Raising) and the Bursar General and were informed of the work being done.

The Definitory met the Secretary General for Formation and Studies, and the Secretary General for Evangelisation to talk about two aid booklets on Ongoing Formation and Parishes.

6. Administrative Matters

32 administrative matters, regarding the issue of decrees, ratifications, dispensations and financial requests from various Entities of the Order, were examined.

Let us restore all to the Lord through words and life! 2008-2009

The means indicated are various (cf. The Grace of our Origins 20 —21); among the many we will recall only some: finding, in each Entity, practical ways of expropriation and restitution of our goods to the poor, who are our teachers and patrons. Taking up once again during the year, on the part of each Friar, the formula of religious profession so that it may become an occasion of gracious commemoration of the gift of our vocation, the review of life and renewed commitment. A public celebration of an act of thanksgiving to the Father of mercies, of praising the Most High and Good Lord for the gift of our Christian and franciscan vocation and of renewing in each one the joy of belonging to Him, who is our richness to sufficiency.

Il-preżenza tal-ħbieb fil-ħajja ta' San Pawl

Norbert Ellul-Vincenti, O.F.M

Fost il-qaddisin inhobb hafna lil San Pawl u 'l San Frangisk ta' Assisi.

Kienu zewg qaddisin ferm differenti minn xulxin, imma jinxtiebhu hafna f'certi affarijiet. Nghidu ahna, nimmaginawhom it-tnejn dejjem imdawwrin bil-ħbieb. Dejjem fic-centru jirrakkontaw, jekk mhux ukoll idoqqu u jkantaw. It-tnejn kienu jhobbu jahdmu b'idejhom, haga li kienu jhobbu jaghmlu, l-ewwel ghax xogholhom kien hafna amministrazzjoni, u t-tieni ghax riedu l-ghajxien taghhom jaqilghuh biex ma jkunux ta' piz ghall-ohrajn.

Barra minn hekk

Barra minn hekk it-tnejn li huma kienu jhobbu lil Kristu b'imhabba tal-genn. San Pawl kiteb biex, "imitaw lili", u San Frangisk huwa maghruf bhala Kristu iehor u, skond it-tradizzjoni l-aktar bniedem li kien jixbah lil Kristu.

Meta San Pawl jitfacca fl-istorja, kien qed jiehu hsieb il-hwejjeg ta' dawk li riedu jhaggru lil Stiefnu. Wahdu ma kienx, mela, imma mal-ħbieb.

Imbaghad nergghu narawh flimkien ma' qabda ħbieb, jaghmel il-kacca ghall-Insara kollha, fit-triq ta' Damasku. Anke hawn jidhlu l-ħbieb, il-kumpanija. Kif jghid, f'kapitlu 22 ta' l-Atti ta' l-Appostli:

[...] Jien mimli hegga ghal Alla, kif ukoll intom

ilkoll illum. Jien hadtha sal-mewt kontra min qabad din it-triq tal-Mulej, u rbatt u tfajt il-habs irgiel u nisa, kif jista' jixhidli l-qassis il-kbir u l-Kunsill kollu tax-xjuh. Kien minghandhom li jien hadt ittri ghal hutna, u mort Damasku biex lil dawk ukoll li kien hemm ingibhom marbutin Gerusalem u jkunu kkastigati.

Hemm nies li jhobbu jkunu wahedhom u ohrajn li ssibhom dejjem fil-kumpanija. M'hemmx imkien miktub direttament li San Pawl kien minn dawk li kienu jhobbu jkunu mdawwrin bil-ħbieb, jirrakkontaw, ihajru, u jmexxu warajhom lil kull min kien jinhatat mis-seher ta' kliemhom, jew tal-karattru taghhom, izda ghandna indikazzjonijiet qawwija hafna li San Pawl kien ihobb il-kumpanija.

Dawk li jhobbu joqogħdu wahedhom, generalment ma ssibhomx popolari, ghax ftit jirrivellaw fuqhom infushom – u n-nies ma thobbx ma tkunx taf id-difetti ta' dak u ta' l-iehor. Bniedem "minghajr" difetti li taf bihom int, ma tistax tinkih, tattakkah, tiggakbinah, precizament ghax ma tafx id-dghajjef tieghu.

Imma San Pawl kien estravert hafna. Fl-ittra lill-Korintin taqbizlu c-cinga wahda sewwa u wara litanija ta' ftahir u ta' kemm ma kienx haqqu kritika, jigi

f'sensih u jistqarr: "Tbellaht! Imma intom gegħltuni. Intom kien imisskom fahhartuni!" (2 Kor. 12:11)

San Pawl niltaqghu mieghu bi kbir fit-triq ta' Damasku (Atti 9:1-20) imdawwar bil-ħbieb li kienu xhieda tal-konverzjoni tieghu. Kwazi kwazi tahseb f'dik ix-xena ta-kacca ta' Paolo Uccello li issa tinsab fil-Muzew Ashmolean ta' Oxford. Kulhadd haga wahda, bil-klieb b'kollox, ecittati dwar il-kacca. Hekk kienu San Pawl u shabu sejrin wara l-Insara. Imbaghad, minn għadu kbir ta' Gesu' u d-dixxipli tieghu, huma rawh isir habib kbir. Il-ħbieb kienu xhieda ta' kif Alla jaf jidhol fil-ħajja tal-bniedem bhal sajjetta fis-siegha mhux mistennija imma minn Alla maghrufa u ddeterminata.

L-ewwel hbiberija li għamel ta' Nisrani wara l-incident fit-triq lejn Damasku, kienet f'Damasku, ma' Anania, li tah lura d-dawl, u San Pawl tghammed – kif naqraw fl-Atti ta' l-Appostli (Atti 9:10). Fl-Atti hemm tliet rakkonti differenti tal-konverzjoni tieghu:

L-ewwel (9:1-20) fejn jara sajjetta u jisma' l-lehen jghid, "Sawl, Sawl, għaliex qed tippersegwitani?"

It-Tieni (22:1-22) San Pawl jispjega x'gara quddiem folla f'Gerusalem.

It-Tielet (26:1-24) jagħti xhieda quddiem is-Sultan

Agrippa II.

Mela Pawlu kien Damasku fejn kien mgħammed, u minn hemm mar l-Arabia u mbaġhad rega' gie Damasku (Gal 1,17). Tliet snin wara l-konverzjoni tiegħu mar Gerusalem u qagħad ma' Gakbu u Pietru għal hmistax-il gurnata. Imbaġhad mar is-Sirja u c-Cilicja mingħajr ma ra lil hadd iżjed mill-Appostli. Ipprova jindiehes magħhom imma kollu għalxejn għax baqgħu jibzghu minnu. Din il-haga tagħtu gewwa hafna, kemm għax stenna aktar fiducja u kemm għax hu kien iħobb il-kumpanija, kif rajna. Bniedem hekk ma jhux pjacir jigi injorat.

Imma fl-aħhar, tfacca habib. Kien veru habib, għax dahal għalih (Atti 9:26-27) u qal lil kulhadd kemm Sawlu kien ikkonverta bis-serjeta'. Dan Barnaba kien eżempju sabih ta' kif habib jista' jkun ta' gid immens fil-hajja.

Imbaġhad Sawlu jew Pawlu telaq fid-dezert iħejji ruhu u jikkonsidra dak li kien gara fil-hajja tiegħu. Jekk kienx hemm hbieb miegħu f'dawk is-snin tad-dezert, ma nafux, imma nahseb li aktar le milli iva. Għax għalhekk mar fid-dezert, biex jimmedita u jitlob. Wahdu ma' Alla.

Ghidna li l-bniedem estravert spiss jirrivela id-difetti tiegħu u dan jiswa biex haddiehor ihossu anqas inferjuri. Wiehed li qatt ma jizbalja iggibilna suggizzjoni. Il-hallelin jippruvaw idahluk komplici, għax imbaġhad iserrhu mohhom minnek, jekk ma jiblekmejljawkx ukoll.

Bniedem fragli ma nibzghux minnu għax mhux ahjar minna. Imma bniedem ahjar minna, igieghna inhossuna zghar hdejh.

Jekk niftakru sewwa, fl-aħhar tat-tieni ittra lill-Korintin (12:6), San Pawl jirrabja għalihom, u jistqarr li għalkemm hu kellu għalfejn jiftahar minhabba l-vizjonijiet tiegħu, ma kienx jaqbillu li jagħmel dan, "biex ma jkunx hemm min jahseb li jien xi haga aktar minn dak li jilmah fija jew minn dak li jismaghni ngħid. U li ma mmurx nintefah bija nnifsi minhabba fil-kobor tar-rivelazzjonijiet, tqegħditli xewka f'gismi, messaggiera tax-xitan, biex toqghod tniġgizni halli ma nintefahx."

Povru Pawlu, kemm tbellah quddiem dawn id-dixxipli mqarba: "Tbellaht! Imma intom gegħeltuni. Intom kien imisskom fahhartuni." Hekk qallhom kif rajna aktar 'il fuq.

X'ma jitbellahx, Pawlu. Minflok ma fahhruh, aktar inkwetawh: "Mela bil-qalb kollha nitghaxxaq bid-debbulizzi tiegħi, bit-tagħjir, bil-ghaks, bil-persekuzzjonijiet, bid-dwejjaq, minhabba Kristu: għax meta nkun dghajef, inkun qawwi."

Pawlu, il-bniedem tal-kumpanija, jistqarr il-limitazzjonijiet tiegħu quddiem kulhadd. Kulhadd jafu u kulhadd jaf x'tip ta' bniedem hu. Pawlu huwa trasparenti.

Meta kien meħtieġ li jibagħtu sussidju fil-Gudeja, minhabba l-guh li waqa' fuq dik in-naha tad-dinja, fis-sena 45 sa 46, l-Insara baġtu din l-

ghajnuna ma' Barnaba u Sawlu, u Sawl rega' irritorna f'Antjokja fejn l-Insara kienu msejha Kristjani għall-ewwel darba. Antjokja kienet saret centru għall-Insara, wara li dawn kienu xterrdu wara l-mewt ta' Stiefnu.

Skond dak li jgħidu l-Atti ta' l-Appostli (Atti 13-14), Pawlu, biex ma jkunx wahdu, ha lil Barnaba miegħu fuq l-ewwel vjagg missjunarju.

Darba minnhom meta kien Gerusalem (Atti 21:28), ingħaraf minn xi Lhud, li xewxu l-folla bil-kliem, "Nies ta' Izrael, aġhtuna l-ghajnuna! Dan hu ragel li qieghed jgħallem lil kulhadd u kullimkien kontra l-poplu tagħna, kontra l-Ligi u kontra dan il-post! Sa wasal ukoll biex idahhal il-Griegi fit-tempju u nigges dan il-post qaddis!" Pawlu kellu hafna hbieb anke qalb il-"griegi" imma issa l-folla mxewxa riedet toqtlu, kieku ma salvatux il-forza Rumana. Jista' jkun li kellu hbieb anke fost dawn.

Fil-vjagg tiegħu lejn Ruma bil-bahar, jidher li San Pawl għamel hbieb u kien influwenti fuq il-bahhara (sa certu pont, għax mhux dejjem semgħu minnu) u fuq l-ekwipagg u speċjalment fuq Gulju c-Centurjun inkarigat biex iwasslu Ruma qawwi u shih. Kien hu li ma riedx li jinqatlu l-prigunieri, biex isalva lil Pawlu, għax, kif jgħid San Luqa, kien iħobbu. Kienu 276 ruh fuq il-gifen, imma lehen Pawlu jinstema' l-iżjed, iwissi, iħabbar li għandhom jagħmlu l-qalb u jieklu xi haga u li jeħtieġ jahbtu ma'

u li jehtieg jahbtu ma' gzira. Il-maltemp jonfoh, ir-rih ivenven, ir-raghad ifaqqa' imma fuq dan l-ghaha kollu, jispikka il-lehen komfortanti ta' Pawlu.

Imbaghad, mal-wasla taghhom fuq Malta, San Pawl jiehu l-karti kollha fidejh, bix-xena tan-nar u l-lifgha, u mbaghad bil-fejqan ta' missier Publju, il-fejqan tal-morda Maltin, il-predikazzjoni u l-konverzjoni tal-Maltin ghal Kristu. X'ma jaghmilx hbieb San

Pawl, u jibqa' meqjuz bhall missier il-Maltin, kif qalilna wkoll recentement il-Papa prezenti.

Forsi kienu ghajnejh iharsu b'harsa ta' seqer, ghall-bnedmin ghatxani ghall-verita'; forsi kienet il-personalita' tieghu, u l-esperjenza kbira li kellu tal-bnedmin; forsi l-ispiritwalita' profonda li ma setghetx tinheba mill-bnedmin; imma zgur li kienu l-Ispirtu ta' Alla, l-imhabba ta' Kristu li seraqlu qalbu darba ghal dejjem, li minnufih sahhru lill-Maltin ghal warajh. Mill-mument li rifes fuq il-gzira taghna, u libes l-ilbies shan u xotti li offrewlu missirijietna, Pawlu sar centru ta' rassa ta' nies li xtaqu ikunu jafu izjed, min kien dan il-bniedem mimli rakkonti, minn xiex kienet mimlija qalbu, x'kien jaghtih il-forza fit-tigrib, x'kien li jaghmlu mexxej anke meta kien prigunier, x'kien ra f'dan Gesu' li fommu kien mimli bih, insomma il-Maltin intebhu li kien wiehed minn dawk il-bnedmin, li ghandek



x'tirbah bil-hbiberija mieghu.

Tradizzjonalment nghidu li Pawlu kien mizmum fil-habs anke hawn Malta, fejn illum hemm il-kripta ta' San Pawl, ir-Rabat. Ma nistghux ma nimmaginawhx, anke fil-habs, imdawwar bis-suldati u bin-nies li gew biex jaraw u jisimghuh, u biex ifejjaqilhom il-morda li gabuhom magghom. Lehnu kien isahhar, imma l-qawwa tieghu ma kinietx naturali biss, imma kienet il-qawwa tal-Vangelu, tal-verita', ta' l-Ahbar it-Tajba li Kristu fethilna il-bwieb tas-Sema u waqqaf is-Saltna tas-Smewwiet.

Kull fejn mar, San Pawl ghamel il-hbieb. Fl-ahhar ta' l-ittri tieghu dejjem isemmi hafna nies. F'kull habs narawh imdawwar minn nies, ihabbar l-ahbar it-Tajba, u jiftah il-bibien ghal Gesu'. Impossibbli timmagina lil San Pawl wahdu u mhux imdawwar. Tant li anke hu hass it-toqol tal-hafna nies gejjin u sejrin. Min hu marid u

Pawlu mhux marid mieghu?

Hekk jikteb lill-Korintin (2 Kor. 11:28-29): *U, biex ma nsemmix hwejjeg ohra, dak il-hafna gej u sejjer tan-nies ta' kuljum ghandi, u l-hsieb tal-knejjes kollha!... Min hu dak li jsib min ifixklu, u jien ma nhossnix inbaqbaq?"*

Fi triqtu lejn Ruma, fuq il-bahar u fuq l-art, tul Sqallija u ibqa' sakemm wasal Ruma, u fil-habsijiet ta' Ruma, in-nies ma naqsietx. U jekk hafna kienu joholqulu l-bsaten fir-roti minhabba twemminu, hafna ohrajn kienu jhobbuh, u jduru mieghu meta jkun fil-qrib.

Tant huwa hekk li meta darba gie abbandunat mill-hbieb, hassha tassew. Forsi ma taghtihomx tort ghal kollox, ghax bezghu ghal hajjitihom, imma lanqas ma tlum lil San Pawl li hass l-assenza taghhom. Hu li kien imdorri dejjem bil-hbieb issa sab ruhu wahdu. Kif stqarr lil Timotju mill-habs fejn kien jinstab (2Tim 4:16): "Fl-

ewwel difiza tieghi hadd ma kien mieghi; kulhadd hal-lieni.” Jekk is-solitudni hija kerha, wisq izjed tikrieh meta ssib ruhek imdawwar mill-ghedewwa minghajr ma jkun hemm hadd jghid kelma favurek jew li tiskuzak.

Pawlu kien jaf tajjeb xi jfisser li jittraduk hutek stess, hbiebek, ta' gewwa. Kif jghid lill-Korintin (11:26): “Sibt ruhi f'perikli fl-ibliet, perikli fid-dezert, perikli fil-bahar, perikli mill-ahwa qarrieqa.”

Li Pawlu kellu hbieb kullimkien jidher minn ghe-luq l-ittri tieghu fejn iselli ghal, u jibghat tisljiet minghand, hafna. P.ez. “Sellili ghal Priska u ghal Aqwila u ghall-familja ta' Onesiforu. Erastu baqa' Korintu, u 'l Trofimu hallejtu marid f'Miletu. Fittex ejja qabel ma tidhol ix-xitwa. Isellu ghalik Ewbolu, Pudens, Linu, Klawdju u l-ahwa kollha.” L-ismijiet ido-

qqu donnhom litanija ta' qaddisin li joqogħdu dejjem vicin tieghek. Hemm hafna nies oħra, li San Pawl kien vicin tagħhom, bhal Lidja li hu kien ikkonverta, u Onezimu l-iskjav li harab lil sidu Filemon, Filemon li San Pawl jitolbu jahfer lill-iskjav u jitolbu mhux biss jaccettah lura imma li jitlob hlas, mhux minghand l-iskjav, imma minghand Pawlu stess. Nistghu in-semmu wkoll lil Titu, Timotju, Silas, Marku, u fuq kollox, it-tabib Luqa, li vjagga mieghu sa Malta u Ruma u kiteb Vangelu u l-Atti ta' l-Appostli.

Imma l-aqwa hbiberija ta' San Pawl, in-namra ta' hajtu kienet ta' Kristu, li ltaqa' l-ewwel darba mieghu fit-triq ta' Damasku. Minn dak il-hin, din il-hbiberija ma ddghajfet qatt, u wasslitu minn dezert ghal dezert, u minn gharqa ghal oħra, u minn periklu ghal iehor, sakemm rasu taret fi

Tre Fontane, ftit 'il barra mill-hitan ta' Ruma, imma mhux qabel ma Pawlu stqarr b-ittri kbar u ghal dejjem li l-aqwa habib kien Kristu (Filip 3:8-11):

“Jiena nghodd kollox bhala telf hdejn il-qligh kbir li hemm filli nagħraf lil Kristu Gesu' sidi; minhabba fih ridt li nitlef kollox, u nghodd kollox bhala knis, biex nirbah lil Kristu, u nkun ninsab fih; mhux ghax ghandi xi gustizzja tieghi, dik li tigi permezz tal-Ligi, izda dik li tigi permezz tal-fidi fi Kristu; il-gustizzja gejjja minn Alla u mibnija fuq il-fidi. Irrid nagħraf lilu u l-qawwa tal-qawmien tieghu mill-inwriet, u naqsam mieghu tthatijiet tieghu, u nsir nix-bhu fil-mewt, biex jirnexxili nikseb il-qawmien mill-inwriet.”

Lil Pawlu ma tifhmux u ma tispejgahx, jekk mhux permezz ta' din l-imhabba tal-genn, ta' Kristu.

Brazil – The fast of Msgr. Luiz Flavio Cappio, OFM

Msgr. Luiz Flavio Cappio, OFM, Bishop of the Diocese of Barra-BA, Brazil, made a 24-day fast in prayer before Christmas 2007. He wished to denounce a mega-project, costing almost 4 billion Dollars, to divert part of the waters of the St. Francis river in Brazil by the Federal Government, through this gesture. The franciscan Bishop has been committed to saving the river and the poor people who live along its banks, for whom the St. Francis river is their source of life, for 40 years. The Bishop knows the reality of the region, very poor and miserable, and indicates, together with other research organisms, more simple, efficient and lower-cost alternatives to resolve the problem of the water. In reality, Msgr. Cappio is denouncing a model of social, economic development which favours the powerful financial groups, the great projects for the exploitation of natural wealth, with great damage to the environment, without any real care for the poor.

The Episcopal Conference of Brazil, through its Pastoral Council, consider the gesture as "an attitude which reveals respect for the dignity of the person and of creation, and an awareness of the capacity of the human being to live in harmony with the environment". The Minister General of the Friars Minor expressed his fraternal closeness and recognised the pastoral zeal and social sensitivity towards the peoples affected by the great project of the diversion of the waters in that gesture of his Bishop confrere. Following his 24-day fast, Msgr. Luiz Cappio wrote a letter to thank all those who expressed their solidarity and to ask them to continue the struggle against the destruction of rivers and the bullying by those who wish to turn every to a profit.



Convocation for the Chapter

Prot. No. 0802/05

4th February 2008

Dear Brothers,

We are blessed in belonging to a brotherhood in which we make decisions together and draw life from the Most High and from each other. We believe the Holy Spirit works in us and through us.

I now formally convene the Provincial Chapter of 2008, to be held at Porziuncola Retreat House, Bahar ic-Caghaq, on Monday 12th May at 9.00 am. I call to the Chapter all solemnly professed friars, except those I have excused. As stated in the General Constitutions and Provincial Statutes, all brothers convoked will have active and passive voice in the elections and deliberations of the Chapter. I invite friars in temporary vows to be present as non-voting members.

“The supreme authority of the Order resides in the General Chapter, that of the Province in the Provincial Chapter...” GGCC 173.

“It is the responsibility of the Provincial Chapter to examine the present state of life and activity of the friars of the Province, to search for and propose suitable means for its growth and improvement, to discuss, and by common council, to decide on new undertakings and affairs of major importance, and to carry out elections” GGCC 215.1.

I am aware that discussions have been taking place in House Chapters and other sessions for an agenda for the Chapter. I ask you to join me in thanking the Chapter Preparations Group for preparing the materials and facilitating the process. May I remind all members of the Chapter that use of Mobile phones and/or texting is not permitted during Plenary Chapter sessions.

For the prayers and commitment to ensuring the good of the Chapter process, many thanks, and not least for the splendid and fraternal welcome I am receiving from all of you as I move around the Province. A special thanks for praying for this formally during Morning and Evening Prayer.

Thank you for your hospitality and openness, I look forward to being with you for the Chapter. May Mary our Mother, brother Francis and sister Clare, along with your esteemed patron S. Paul continue to intercede for us.

Faternally,

Austin McCormack, ofm
General Visitor

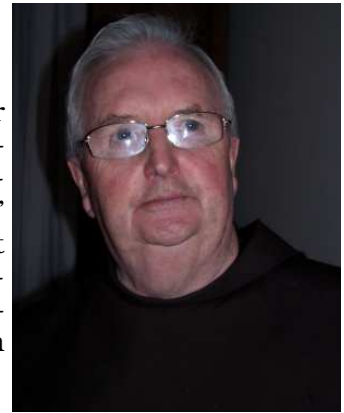
Whoever saves one life, saves world entire.

Talmud

informazzjoni

Vizta Kanonika

F'dawn il-jiem qed tissokta l-Vizta Kanonika mill-Vizitatur Ġenerali Fra Austin McCormack, OFM. Huwa diġa' żar lill-aħwa taż-żewġ komunitajiet ta' Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, ta' tas-Sliema u l-Ħamrun. Bħalissa huwa jinsab fil-fraternita' ta' Għawdex. Imbagħad huwa jkompli l-vizta fil-komunitajiet tar-Rabat, tal-Belt kif ukoll lill-aħwa li jinsabu residenti fid-Dar tal-Kleru, B'kara. Wara se jiltaqa' ma' l-aħwa kollha taż-żewġ komunitajiet fil-Libja u se jżur il-Maltese Mission f'Londra.



Jum il-Ħajja Kkonsagrata fil-Ħamrun

Nhar il-Gimgha, 1 ta' Frar, il-fraternita' tal-Ħamrun iċċelebrat Jum il-Ħajja Kkonsagrata.

Għal din il-festa ġew mistiedna s-sorijiet Franġiskani tal-Qalb ta' Ġesu' (Fra Diegu Home) kif ukoll is-Sorijiet tal-Qalb Bla Tebġha ta' Marija (Ta' l-Eġittu).

Ġiet iċċelebrata l-Ewkaristija mill-Vizitatur Ġenerali Austin McCormack u l-komunita' tal-patrijiet u wara ġiet organizzata pasta night għall-patrijiet u s-sorijiet. Għall-ikel kien hemm preżenti wkoll il-Ministru Provinċjal Fra Paul Galea, OFM.



Kapitlu Provinċjali

12 - 16 ta' Mejju

Porziuncola

Retreat House

Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq

You never know what happiness a simple act of kindness will bring about. Bree Abel

Archbishop Mgr. Paul Cremona, O.P. celebrates Mass at Ġesu' Habib

The feast of 'Ġesu' l-Habib' is celebrated every year on the 8th of January. This year this date was highlighted by an even more special occasion than usual as we had with us his Excellency Mgr. Paul Cremona O.P., Archbishop of Malta.

Preparations for this occasion started very early last year almost immediately after it was made known that Mgr. Cremona had been appointed to succeed Mgr. Joseph Mercieca as Archbishop of Malta. It was not until August of last year that eventually the date for Mgr. Cremona's visit was fixed for the 8th of January 2008. As the day drew near, preparations gathered momentum leading to a successful event, one to be remembered.

The congregation gathered in the chapel at 5.00pm and while it waited for the arrival of the Archbishop, a rehearsal of the hymns that were to be sung during Mass was held. His grace arrived as scheduled some time after 5.45pm and was greeted at the door of the chapel by Fr. Richard Stanley Grech, OFM, Rector, Fr. Paul Galea, OFM, Minister Provincial, Fr. Alex Borg, OFM and Fr. Maurice Abela O.Carm, parish priest of Balluta parish, who were also to concelebrate Mass with his grace, and Fr. Brincat, master of ceremonies. On his arrival, Mgr. Cremona was greeted by a round of applause by all present. Having knelt in silent prayer for a while, his grace proceeded to the sacristy to prepare for

Mass which started at 6.00pm.

At the beginning of the Mass, Mr. Edward Vella, on behalf of Fr. Richard, OFM and all those present, read a welcome address. The first reading was delivered by Mr. Victor Grech while the responsorial psalm was read by Ms. Maria Testa. Fr. Paul Galea, OFM proclaimed the Gospel. His grace then delivered an homily emphasizing the Gospel message of love which should lead us all to live the easter mystery in our daily lives. The prayers of the faithful were read out by Mrs. Josephine Libreri. Ms. Melita Saydon on the guitar and Bro. Jacob Portelli MSSP on the violin led the congregation in singing the hymns and were very instrumental in helping all present to enter into a deeper spiritual dimension.

At the end of the Mass Fr. Richard presented a cheque for 2000 euros, gathered at the chapel during every Thursday evening Mass held at the chapel last year, to Fr. Maurice Abela O.Carm for him to forward to Fr. Garvin Grech O.Carm. parish priest of Tarija parish in Bolivia run by and the Maltese Carmelite province. Fr. Richard, finally presented a gold and silver icon representing Our Lady of Succours to his grace as a token of gratitude and appreciation for his being with us that evening. Finally a commemorative wall plaque was unveiled and blessed by Mgr. Cremona.

Ġesu' Habib new website launched

On the occasion of the visit of the Archbishop visit to 'Ġesu' l-Habib' Chapel, Fr. Richard and the Community are launching a new website which will feature the events of the same chapel. Fr. Richard said that on this special occasion information on the internet regarding the chapel will be something tangible to commemorate this event. The new web site will be found on <http://ofm.org.mt/gesuhabib>





FRATERNITAS

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Sister Death

In the early hours of the morning of the 24th December 2007, when everyone was ready to celebrate joyfully the Birth of the Lord, our dear brother Seán Collins, Secretary General of the Order was called to the house of the Father after a brief and painful illness. He died in Dublin, where we was undergoing necessary treatment. The Fraternity of the General Curia remembers with gratitude this brother of good heart who left behind a testimony to a profound faith and a great love for the Order. In July last, before returning home to Ireland, Br. Seán wanted to take his leave from the community of the Curia in a climate of prayer, asking that the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick would be administered to him. On that occasion he showed his desire to fulfil all that is prescribed in our General Constitutions. He, who had been a professor of liturgy for many years, offered us a most beautiful and incisive lesson on the liturgy, affirming through his own life that the grace of the Lord really sustains and comforts a person at the painful moments of illness and opens us up to the hope of eternal life.

Blessed John Duns Scotus in the VII Centenary of his death

Duns Scotus firmly believed all that God revealed about Himself to us. But he also wished to know, through reason, in as far as that is possible, the truths of the faith in order to render them accessible, understandable and acceptable to human reason, even by those who were without faith: illustrations, deep study, dilutions on the intellectual level are nothing more than efforts of the mind of Scotus to demonstrate the non-contradictory nature of the truths of faith through human reason, but also their perfect consistency with it, and so make them acceptable to all.

Here is the prayer he proposed: "Lord, our God, may You be proclaimed the first and the last; teach your servant the way to demonstrate through reason what he holds to be most certain by faith" (Chap. 3).

Rome – Publications for the Jubilee of the Order

With the imminence of the celebrations of the VIII Centenary of the Order (2009), the General Curia of the OFM favoured, with the presence of the Minister General, the publication of two books: Praise and Bless, the Prayers of St. Francis (edited by Br. Luigi Perugini; in 9 languages), and Franciscan without frontiers, The Missions of the Friars Minor in the world (edited by Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli; in 8 languages).

The two publications wish to be, above all, a means to know Francis more deeply (The Prayers) and to revive the missionary spirit in all the Friars (The missions), in addition to making known the "heart" of Francis and the missionary high point of our Order. The elegant graphics and the beauty of the photographs make the two books very attractive and can also be the object of gifts to those who wish to sample the rich franciscan spirituality.

For further information you may contact directly the Publishers: Éditions du Signe: 1, rue Alfred Kastier-Eckbolsheim, B.P. 94, 67038 Strasbourg, Cedex 2, France (tel.: +33 3 88789191; email: info@editionsdusigne.fr).

The Holy Land - President Bush in Capernaum

The Custos of the Holy Land, Br. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and Br. Peter Vasko, an American, were the two official guides for President Bush and Condoleezza Rice during

their visit to Capernaum. The visit began in the Church, which covers and protects the house of Peter, and continued along the bank of the lake and ended back at the house of Peter. At each stop, Br. Peter Vasko read a passage from the Bible concerning the site at Capernaum, in English. The President and Condoleezza Rice listened attentively to the biblical excerpt as well as to the explanations which were offered.



As he departed, the President warmly greeted the franciscan community and the Sisters of catechism and asked those present to pray for the success of his tour of the Middle East and for peace in that part of the world. See: <http://198.62.75.5/opt/xampp/custodia/?p=2859>

Singapore – Meeting of the Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies of the SAAO Conference

The Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies of the Conference of South Asia, Australia and Oceania met in Singapore, guests of the local Custody, from the 5th to the 9th January 2008. Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, participated in the meeting. The Secretaries shared on the situation of formation in the different Entities of the Conference, present in geographical and cultural contexts which are very different one from the other. There is a good vocational response in the Asiatic and Oceanic Entities and a commitment to invest evermore in the formation of formators and in discernment. The multi-cultural and inter-religious context presents special challenges to the presence and activity of Christians and also to the proposal of the religious life. The reality of Australia and New Zealand is similar to that of western countries. Ways for better collaboration among the Entities were studied, in addition to putting the final touches to the course for formators in Asia, to be held in Bangalore (India), from the 12th to 30th of January 2008, organised by the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies together with the Conference. During the meeting, the Secretaries participated in the ceremony of admission to the novitiate of two novices of the Custody of “St. Anthony”, in Singapore, and of the first profession of a novice of the same Custody and two novices from East Timor.

Beauty will save the world: an exhibition of photographs

Br. Luigi Perugini, of the Communications Office OFM, has an exhibition of 157 photographs, from the 12th to 27th January, at the Municipal Theatre of Santa Maria Nuova, a small town on a green hill close to Jesi (Italy). It deals with flowers and landscapes from various countries (Argentina, Austria, California, Croatia, Germany, Poland and Slovenia), but especially of the Le Marche Region. The exhibition, titled “Beauty will save the world”, was staged according to the artistic taste of Ivo Batocco, a painter, in collaboration with his wife, Elda, and with the help of Dario Romagnoli and

Br. Valdevino. The Mayor and Cultural Assessor of Santa Maria Nuova, and the Minister Provincial OFM of Le Marche were at the inauguration on the 12th January. The pictures, inspired by the many landscapes of Le Marche and by the 800 anniversary of the 1st journey of St. Francis to Le Marche (1208), proclaim and comment on the Canticle of Creatures with rare efficacy. The “photographer” concluded by saying he would be pleased if the visitors, having seen the photographs, were to feel inclined to pause to contemplate the beauty spread along our paths.

Sydney – International Meeting of the You.Fra on the occasion of WYD 2008

The franciscan youth of the entire world is preparing for the XXIII World Youth Day, which will be celebrated in Sydney on the 15th to 20th July 2008. On that occasion, as is already traditional, there will be an International Meeting of You.Fra before the WYD, scheduled for the 12th to 15th July, in the St. Francis of Assisi Primary School in Paddington, Sydney.

All information regarding the programme, inscription and the many different materials about the You.Fra, specially prepared for this meeting, can be found on the web page: www.ciofs.org/wyd2008.

For further information, contact the following address: gifra@ciofs.org.

Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Madariaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa (Honduras), will be the main speaker at the International Meeting of You.Fra.

Brazil – Seminar on the reality of the Amazon Basin in Manaus

During the meeting of the Interprovincial Secretariat for Evangelisation of the Brazilian Conference, in August 2007, it was decided to organise a Seminar for a broad reflection on the reality of the Amazon Basin, on the peculiarities of this vast region from the ecological, social, cultural, religious and ecclesiastical point of view, on the challenges of and possibilities for an ecclesiastical and franciscan presence in a missionary-evangelising and peace-justice-integrity of creation perspective, on the presence of the Friars Minor and on the search for other initiatives. The main responsibility for the Seminar lies with the Autonomous Custody of St. Benedict, in Amazonia, Brazil, with the collaboration of the General Secretariat for Evangelisation (SGE). The people addressed are: the Provincial Secretaries for Evangelisation, the Provincial Moderators for Missions and some Ministers Provincial of the Brazilian and Bolivarian Conferences (especially of those Entities which are present in the region). The involvement of the Apostolic Vicariates entrusted to the Friars Minor and present in the reality of the Amazon Basin will also be sought. The motto of the Seminar is “we are challenged to make the Amazon Basin our cloister”. The Seminar will be held in Manaus, Amazonia, Brazil, from the 11th to the 15th of February 2008. The Custos, João Schwieters, can be contacted at: joaoofm@hotmail.com

Franciscan bookmark

- **A look beyond** *Women, lettered and saints in the movement of Franciscan Observance*, (in Italian) AA.VV., Edizioni Porziuncola 2007, pp. 2004.
- The present volume, through the harmony of many voices, goes deeply into the feminine contribution to one of the very rich but as yet little studied pages of franciscan history.
- **The Aquilian Blesseds of the Observance** *Bernardino da Fossa, Vincenzo dell’Aquila, Timoteo da Monticchio*, edited by Alvaro Cacciotti and Maria Melli, Editrici Francescane 2007. The book reproduces the Acts of the historical Congress on the occasion of the V Centenary of the death of the Blessed: Bernardino da Fossa († 1503), Vincenzo dell’Aquila († 1504) and Timoteo da Monticchio († 1504), held on the 7th and 8th of May 2004 at Aquila. The aim of the

book is to examine the figures of the Abruzzi Blessed by drawing up, for the first time, a critical exhaustive picture. The data offered by various contributions have the merit of wisely unravelling the events and the topics dealt with in the face of the intricate institutional, religious and financial context which the city of Aquila saw at the centre of a process which recorded the progressive growth of the "observant" reality. The role of the Blessed and the close examination of the socio-cultural processes, not least that of the political, religious and cultural dynamics, document the important historical function absolved by the "Observance" through its capacity to insert itself with full rights into the various contexts of its time. The present book meticulously reproduces the steps of a scientific search which restores full value to the data sometimes assumed uncritically by historiography.

Big/small news

• **The inauguration of the Masters in the Franciscan Middle-ages**, the 14th December 2007: The Higher School of Medieval and Franciscan Studies at the Pontifical University Antonianum, Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the LUMSA University inaugurated the course for a Masters: The Franciscan Middle-ages. History, philosophy and theology. In the inaugural lecture on The Master, Br. Francis and the Gospel, between the letter and the spirit, Prof. André said: "The 'forma vitae Minorum' is nothing other than a spiritual fidelity to the letter of the evangelical text, considered as the keystone of Christian behaviour and the measure by which all religious observances and practices of the Friars must be measured".

"The Poverello of Assisi was a partisan of a "spiritually literal" observance of the Rule, in the measure in which this constitutes not an absolute, but a relative means to an end, that is, to the service of the spiritual progress of the individual and of the community to which he belonged".

The text of the intervention by Vauchez will be published in the review "Frate Francesco" 74 (2008).

• **Colombia - 15 years of the University of St. Bonaventure in Cartagena de Indias**: Different academic, cultural and religious activities were prepared for the occasion, from the 20th September to 26th November 2007. The President of the Republic of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe Vélez, wrote a letter on the occasion in which he said: "Colombia supported the University of St. Bonaventure in Cartagena, in all these commitments since 1992, when it was created to commemorate the V Centenary of the Discovery and Evangelisation of America. Since then, the University has defined itself as a scientific entity open to free, not dogmatic, critical teaching with spontaneity and without discord, aggressive in ideas and exemplary in living with others." See: www.usbctg.edu.co

• **The Holy Father appointed Br. Adriano Garuti**, OFM, who is a Lecturer in Ecclesiology at the Latern Pontifical University, Consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

• **Pesaro/Italy - "La Terra dei Fioretti" Concerto**: The world premiere of the "La Terra dei Fioretti" concerto, composed by Br. Armando Pierucci, on the occasion of the opening of the VIII Centenary of the arrival of St. Francis to Le Marche (1208) was held at the church of the Friars Minor, "St. John the Baptist", in Pesaro, on the 26th November 2007. It is a work for a mezzo-soprano, baritone, oboe and organ, inspired by an episode of St. Francis and of his early companions in Le Marche, contained in Chapters 42-53 of the *Fioretti*. Many people attended, among them religious and political personages. Two General Definitors from the General Curia, Br. Mario Favretto and Br. Ignacio Muro, participated. Images of places in the Holy Land were projected on the big screen during the concerto. Br. Armando, of the Province of le

Marche, worked for 20 years in Jerusalem, where he gave life to "The Magnificat Institute", a school of music which has 180 students at the moment.

• **Appointment of the new Secretary General of the Order:** The General Definitory, following the death of Br. Seán Collins, appointed **Br. Ernest Karol Siekierka**, (Province of St. Francis of Assisi, Poland), up to now the Vice-Secretary of the Order, to this Office.

• **Wednesday, 16th January 2008**, on the occasion of the Feast of the University and of the Grand Chancellor of the PUA, the **Laudatio** of His Em. Umberto Cardinal Betti, on the theology worked out by him, was held.

• **The Poor Clare Monastery of St. Agnes of Perugia (Italy)** in collaboration with the Theological Institute of Assisi, the Higher School of Medieval and Franciscan Studies of the Pontifical University Antonianum presented, on the 18th January 2008, the book: *The Federation of St. Clare of Assisi of the Poor Clares of Umbria-Sardinia, The Gospel as a form of life. On listening to Clare in her Rule.* Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Paolo Martinelli, Sara Donata Isella, and Chiara Cristiana Mondonico, participated.

• **Meeting of the recently elected Ministers Provincial and Custodes:** The annual meeting of recently elected Ministers Provincial and Custodes was held at the General Curia in Rome from the 14th to the 22nd of January 2008. 20 Ministers and Custodes were present. It was a meeting between brothers to share about their responsibility for the animation of the Order of Friars Minor. Many and various contributions were offered by the speakers on animation, governance and administration of the provincial and custodial fraternities. The participants had an opportunity to meet personally with the Minister and Definitors General and to get to know the work carried out in the General Curia by the different Secretariats and Offices.

The meeting began with a celebration of the Eucharist, presided by the Minister General, for the repose of the souls of our deceased brothers: Seán Collins (Province of Ireland) Secretary General, Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider (Brazil), Msgr. Sebastião Assis Figueiredo (Brazil), Msgr. José Gómez González (Spain), and Nevelono Lourenço Tiago (Brazil).

• **President of the Proyecto Hombre Association in Spain:** Br. Jesús Hernández Martín, Vicar Provincial of the Province of Cartagena (Spain) has been appointed President of the *Proyecto Hombre* (Humanity Project) Association in Spain. The *Proyecto Hombre* Association is an NGO, founded in Spain 23 years ago, which is dedicated to the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug-addicts. It is composed of 26 authorised centres which carry out 12 programmes spread over 80% of the Spanish territory. The evolution of the needs and the changes in profiles provoke a diversification in the responses, giving rise to different programmes suitable to different people, the young among them.

New Visitor General

Br. Louis Mascarenhas of the Autonomous Custody of St. John the Baptist in Pakistan, for the Province of the Holy Korean Martyrs in Korea.

Agenda of the Minister General

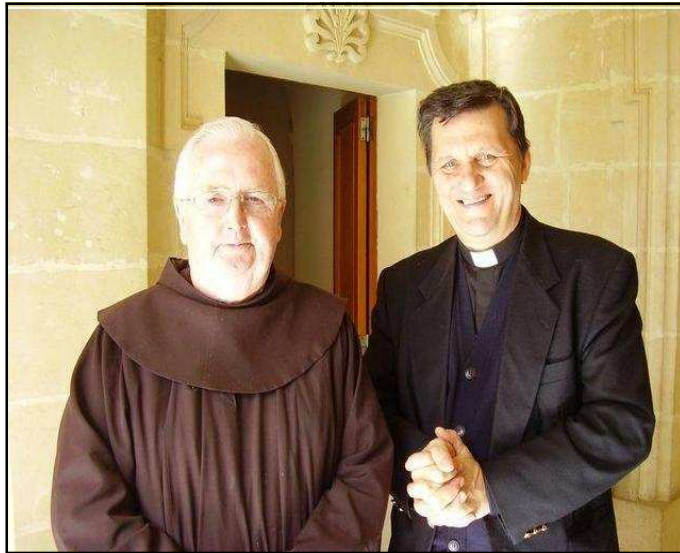
From 5th to 6th February: Conclusion of the meeting of the Presidents of the Poor Clare Federations (Assisi).

From 9th to 14th February: Visit to the fraternities of the Custody of the Holy Land, Syria and Lebanon.

The 18th February: Audience with His Holy Father Benedict XVI.

From 19th to 22nd February: Visit to the Province of St. Casimir (Lithuania).

The 25th February: Meeting with the Friars who live in Switzerland.



Matul il-Viżta Kanonika fil-fraternita' ta' Ghawdex, Fr. Austin zar lill-isqof ta' Ghawdex, Mons. Mario Grech. Ara wkoll paġna 13.

FESTI U BIRTHDAYS

FRAR

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. Fra Richard S. Grech | 7. Fra Alfred Tabone |
| 10. Fra Pawl Galea | 14. Mons. S. Magro |
| Fra Paul Attard | 19. Fra Arthur Azzopardi |
| 12. Post. Aaron Abdilla | |

MARZU

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

**Awguri
u Xewqat Sbieh!**

Cardinal Hummes, OFM

Priests Need Prayers

Prefect Explains Spiritual-Motherhood Initiative

*ara
paġna 2*

F' DIN IL-HARĠA

Novembru 2007

Priest need Prayers	2
Congr. Min. Et Cust. Recenter electorum	3
Communication from the General Definitory	5
Il-hames difetti f'Ġesu' Kristu	6
Il-prezenza tal-hbieb fil-hajja ta' San Pawl	8
Convocation for the Chapter	12
Informazzjoni	13
Fraternitas	15

L-AĦBAR

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