

You are our faith

Presentation of the letter of the General Minister

The Year of Faith, proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI and proposed anew in content and purpose by Pope Francis, calls on each brother to take a look at and renew his own relationship with the Lord. It is with this intention that the General Minister, Br. Mauro Jöhri, opens the letter he writes to all the brothers of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin.

Introduced by the words of the Virgin Mary: "Here I am! Let it be done to me according to your word," the journey of faith is marked by the steps made in discipleship, re-evaluated at the same time as a theological locus, anticipating its own development even ahead of the search for sense, such that it may be said rightly with Mary, 'Mission precedes understanding'

Indeed, 'Mission precedes Understanding' is the leitmotiv or the cloth out of which the Letter written by the General Minister to all the friars of the Order is woven.

'A journey of faith' winds as a time of grace in the 'time of struggle,' where, in the following of Jesus Christ, we are supported by his Word: "Courage. Do not be afraid," such that the experience becomes one of growth and awareness, but above all of Communion with Him who is the "pioneer

and perfecter of our faith." (Heb 12:2)

The words recorded in the meeting between the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth resonate in this experience; words that 'stop time,' words of the joy that comes from a lived faith: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." (Lk 1:45) The time of struggle; the time of Grace! "The time of Joy!"

We know "that the gift of faith must be protected and cultivated,"—and knowing also "that the believer goes through the temptation of the routine, of compromise and not infrequently there is a dryness that injects the feelings of discouragement that keep us from seeing the clear and bright horizon

that faith opens to our existence," the General Minister responds by inviting all the friars of the Order to share with one another the gift of faith.

This is precisely how the letter concludes: "I wish that our provincial and local fraternities be places where we support each other in the journey of faith and help each other to recognize the presence of the Risen Lord among us. Let us witness to the beauty of the faith, helping each other with mercy and patience in the struggles of belief that come to us in our lives."

Br. Umberto Losacco OFM Cap.



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New General Definitor

Br. Victorius Dwiardy, appointed General Definitor in substitution of Br. Cesar Acuin in the meeting of the Definitory on June 27, 2013, was born December 11, 1966 in Sebalos, Indonesia. He entered the Capuchin novitiate of the Province of Pontianak on July 15, 1989, made his first profession in 1990 and his perpetual profession on August 23, 1997. After the studies of philosophy and theology and priestly ordination on October 2, 1999, he studied civil law at the Christian University of Indonesia in Jakarta, specializing in and earning a degree in Private Law in 2008. He worked as parochial vicar in the cathedral parish of the Archdiocese of Pontianak, serving also as General Secretary and Chancellor as well as a member of the Council of Consultants of the same archdiocese. Br. Victorius was also executive secretary and later president of the Dharma Insan Foundation – a foundation started by the Archdiocese of Pontianak to support the Catholic hospital of St. Anthony and the Institute for the training of nurses and midwives. Within the Order he carried out the duties of Definitor and Provincial Minister of the Province of Pontianak. He was then vice president, and - recently - President of the PACC Conference.

Changes in the General Definitory

ROME, Italy – Br. Cesar Acuin, General Definitor for PACC, asked to resign his position for reasons of health. Gathered in ordinary session on June 17, 2013, the General Definitory accepted his request. In a subsequent 'extraordinary' session held during the meeting of new

ministers on June 27, following the presentation of nominations by the PACC Conference, the General Minister, with the consent of his Definitory, appointed as General Definitor Br. Victorius Dwiardy, until now Provincial Minister of the Province of Pontianak, Indonesia.





• *Brother David, next year you will celebrate ten years since your arrival in Iceland. You are not Icelandic. You come from the Slovak Republic, land of St. Elizabeth, patron of the OFS, and you made your way to the 'land of the elves' in October of 2004. What memories do you have of that time in Slovakia? And of your Community?*

• For me, we're not talking about a period of life in the past but of something always present, because I am here in Iceland always as a member of our Slovak province and I live a deep, fraternal relationship with our province. If I go for vacation in Slovakia, I always say, 'I'm going home.' At the same time, thanks be to God, it is true vice versa; leaving Slovakia I say that I'm going home to Iceland. ...and I hope, before I die, I can say for the last time, I'm going home...

• *What made you leave the mountain country of Central Europe to go to the middle of the Atlantic between the northern seas and touch the land of the Vikings?*

I believe it was God himself who pushed me to come to this place. I like being here very much, but if it were not Him, I would not wish to stay here any longer. I had felt the calling to go in mission for years, and the prospects were always some northern place... Greenland, Siberia... Iceland was one of the possibilities.

• *For centuries the faith of the land of Iceland has been inspired by the Lutheran Church. And the Catholics? Can you speak to us of the religious soul of Iceland? And of the Catholic communities?*

Icelandic Christians belong to the National Lutheran Church of Iceland, independent from other Protestants but in close contact with them. We Catholics are very much a minority (3% of the population), made up of a few natives and many immigrants. However, I can say that the relations with the local church are very good. When, for example, they speak of the Catholic Church, they speak of mother church... I am 50 years old and I have never in my life heard Protestants speak that way.

• *Can you highlight a particularly Icelandic quality in living and sharing faith in Jesus?*

Here time, nature, the mentality, everything is different. When I arrived, I needed time

The last issue of BICI reported the news of the visit of the General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri and his Vicar Br. Štefan Kožuh to the 3 Capuchin Friars living in Iceland. Soon after, Br. David Tencer, one of the missionaries in Iceland, was with us and we took the occasion to ask him some questions about his experience living in Iceland.

Br. Umberto Losacco ofmcap

Presence, witness, perseverance and... patience

Interview with Br. David Tencer OFMcap

to get used to it. To open a door you have to remember to turn the lock the opposite way. And the old bishop, seeing this, said to me...all opposite...remember that in Iceland everything is the opposite...a quality - perhaps very rare in traditionally Catholic countries - is a personal responsibility for the faith and the church...

The Catholic Church survived here in the difficult times of the early 1900s, thanks precisely to individuals...at that time there was, for example - officially - just one Catholic, Gunnar Einarsson. He educated his children in the faith and his last son became a priest and then in 1942 he became the first bishop of the diocese of Reykjavik...this is how personal responsibility bears fruit...

• *The chronicles relate that the first Capuchin house was opened in 2007. But you had already been in the area since 2004. When the Bishop of Iceland made the request in 2010 for a new Capuchin fraternity for the care of the Polish, Lithuanian, and Filipino migrants present on the island, how did you feel, what reaction did you have?*

A great joy...It is God who gives growth...and that relations with diocese are so good and open...I do not know...joy...joy

• *Then in the meeting held at the General Curia on November 15 to 18, 2010, the General Definitory responded positively to the request of the Bishop of Iceland for the foundation of a new fraternity for the care of the Polish, Lithuanian, and Filipino migrants present on the island. This is now your fraternity? And your ministry?*

We are currently three friars of the Slovak province. But we hope to add to the number. There was someone interested in our vocation; we have also had a novice that then left, but has always remained in a very close relationship with us.

The territory of our parish, extending to the southeast for about 700 km of coastline, encompasses the whole east of Iceland. The population is about 20,000, of which about 700 are Catholics...but as I explained to the Lutheran priests in a meeting, all 20,000 are ours, because we have the responsibility to pray for them all.



Our Masses have ten people taking part, but we are from six nations...Christmas 2005 was the record when we had present for the Mass at Night people from 33 nations. It is clear, therefore, that communication is not possible through words. It seems to me that is presence, witness, and perseverance that gives fruit...and patience...as the Icelanders say, 'When God made time, he made enough'.

• *This year you had the Pastoral Visit of the General Minister: Would you talk about it? For what do you hope?*

It was a historic event, because it was the first time since the creation of the world that a Capuchin General Minister came to Iceland. For me personally it was a great gesture of fraternity, to make us feel that we are not abandoned, forgotten, lost among the glaciers... And what

will come out of it? I believe and I hope that things will move forward. But even if nothing changes, already precious to us is the sense of fraternity that Mauro and Stefan brought.

Meeting of New Ministers at Frascati

FRASCATI, Italy – The customary meeting for the formation and information of new ministers, set up already for ten years according to the expressed will of the 2000 General Chapter, took place from June 23 to 29. This time it was the time of the event that was new; whereas until 2012 it was held in the month of January, this year it was decided to have it in June – a more favorable time from the point of view of the weather. In attendance were 32 major superiors—provincial and viceprovincial ministers and custodes—elected in 2012 and in the first five months of this year.

In the mornings the most important topics for animation were treated, among which there were themes such as: The figure and role of the minister, authority and obedience seen from the pastoral perspective, fidelity to the consecrated life, particularly in the area of the vow of chastity, the government of a circumscription under the juridical-canonical aspect, the Constitutions and Statutes, fraternal collaboration between circumscriptions, formation in the Order, international economic solidarity, missionary animation and animation in the area of Justice, Peace and Ecology.

Among others, two documents approved by the last General Chapter in 2012 were presented: the first takes consideration the procedures to be implemented in the case of abuse of children and vulnerable adults; the second regards the directives in the area of fraternal collaboration between circumscriptions, known until recently as solidarity of personnel. In the economic sphere, in addition to emphasizing the need to further promote economic solidarity, the General Bursar presented a new initiative that will consist

of an electronic inventory of our houses. Each major superior is invited to fill out, on a website to be set up by the end of the year, the forms to provide the information needed for a database of the world-



wide Capuchin patrimony.

The participants had, as always, the opportunity to meet those responsible for the various offices and services of the General Curia—to meet in person those to whom a minister interacts on a practical level in the work and services of these offices. This appointment was accompanied and closed by a fraternal meeting with the whole fraternity of the General Curia at a supper in Frascati. To all of this was added a visit to the International College and to other central institutions of the Order: the Franciscan Museum, the Library, and the General Archives.

On the morning of the last day, each participant was able to share his own experience of the week. What was emphasized the most was the fraternal atmosphere created among the participants, the presence of the General Minister and Definitors during the whole of the gathering, the liturgical prayer and meditation made in common.

Fraternal visit to Turkey

TURKEY – The fraternal visitation of the Custody of Turkey was carried out on May 19-26 by Br. Pio Murat, General Definitor, accompanied by the Provincial Minister of Emilia-Romagna. Br. Pio, originally from Izmir (ancient Smyrna), was able to visit the four Capuchin communities and speak with

all the friars. Especially striking was the Saturday evening in Maryemana where there was a candlelight vigil for the feast of St. John with the participation of a hundred Turkish Christians from our communities. Bishop Ruggero Franceschini presided at the intense and participatory Sunday Mass at the tomb of

Meeting of the General Definitory

ROME, Italy – Ahead of the fifth Definitory meeting, on June 8, 2013 the General Minister, accompanied by the General Procurator and his personal Secretary, presented to the Holy See the Constitutions and Statutes of our Order approved by the 84th General Chapter and then further reviewed by the Juridical and Editorial Commissions, such that they may be confirmed.

In the meeting itself, held in Rome from June 17-23, 2013, various topics were treated concerning personal issues of friars, of circumscriptions and of interprovincial collaboration; mid-term reports of circumscriptions were also discussed as well as the reports of conference meetings and of various recently celebrated chapters.

Approvals of some requests for admission to the International College for the academic year 2013-2014 which did not require the award of scholarships were received.

Some brothers in charge of offices and services of the General Curia were invited to the meeting and the Manual of the General Bursary was approved for a period of three years.

Circumscriptions

The request of the Domus Presentiae in Arunchal Pradesh, India to erect the Delegation of Arunchal Pradesh was accepted. Also, the Domus Presentiae in Malawi will become the Custody of Malawi.

General Curia – Appointments

Br. Jean Marcel Rossini, of the Province of Sardinia and Corsica, was appointed Secretary for the French Language and Assistant General Postulator; he will carry out at the same time the work of bursar of the fraternity of Garbatella;

Br. Domenico Donatelli, of the Province of Apulia, was appointed Liturgical Animator for the International College of St. Lawrence of Brindisi.

Br. Carlo Calloni, of the Province of Lombardy, was appointed Vicar of the fraternity of Garbatella;

Br. Próspero Arciniegas of the Province of Colombia was appointed a member of the General Formation Council as delegate of the CCA Conference.

The first recommendations for the celebration of CPO VIII, which will be dedicated to the theme of “The grace of working,” were developed.

In the sixth Definitory meeting, held in Rome on June 2013 during the meeting of new ministers, in addition to the previously mentioned appointment of a new General Definitor, Br. Hugo Mejia Morales, General Definitor, was appointed General Secretary for Missionary Animation and Br. Joaquim José Hangalo of the Viceprovince of Angola as information systems manager at the General Curia.

Franciscan friars at Mount Athos

The International Franciscan Centre for Dialogue (CEFID) in Assisi, organized an official visit to Mount Athos from June 10-12, 2013. This was in response to an invitation from Fr. Ioustinos and Fr. Joannikios, two monks from Athos who came on pilgrimage to Assisi in October of 2012 along with the paternal blessing of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I.

Participating in the visit were Friar Jerzy Norel, Vicar General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, Friar Mauro Gambetti, Custos of the Sacred Con-

vent in Assisi, Friar Silvestro Bejan, General Delegate for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, and two friends and collaborators of CEFID: Mr. Virgilio Avato of Grottaferrata and an honorary citizen of Patmos, and Mr. Ioannis Chrysaifis, a Greek journalist. It seems like a visit such as this has never taken place in the history of the Franciscan Order.

Arriving at the sacred Monastery of Simonopetra, the afternoon of June 10th, the Friars were received in the great Chapter Hall in an atmosphere of genuine Christian fraternity demonstrating a splendid generosity and hospitality. During the course of the three day stay, there were continuing interesting dialogues with the Abbot, Fr. Elisha, and with the monks of the community, and it was agreed to repeat the meeting in Assisi in order to share the rich spiritual heritage which has as its center, the union with God and his Divine Light that transforms us, because everything is identified in the absolute and infinite thought of God. The Friars participated in the Divine Religious Ceremonies of the sacred Monastery of Simonopetra (Morning Prayer, Divine Liturgy, Vespers), meals together with the monks, and various moments of fraternity among the monastic community.

Certainly, the monastic fathers of the holy Mountain of Athos received their Franciscan brothers with great love, and thanks to this visit, another small step has been realized in the seeking of a spiritual link and mutual openness in the search we all share for God.

Br. Silvestro Bejan, OFMConv.

General Delegate for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue

The Franciscan Family at WYD Rio 2013

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil – The Franciscan Family of Brazil (FFB) is preparing to offer a true fraternal gathering for all who are related or attracted to the way of Ss. Francis and Clare of Assisi, a path that continues to have millions of followers and supporters all over the world. In terms of the schedule, there will be the following Franciscan events: (1) International meeting of Franciscan Youth (YouFra) – from July 19 – 22 in the city of São João del Rei, MG. (2) Vocation Stand – between July 23 and 28, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., in Quinta da Boa Vista in Rio de Janeiro. (3) Franciscan Space – Meeting Place where there will be musical and artistic performances, workshops, and a place for prayer and reflection to be offered above all in a deeper fraternal communion on July 23, 25, and 26, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (4) The meeting with the Franciscan General Ministers – as a true family, there will be a close and direct dialogue with the young people and Franciscans from all the branches of the Order. It will be on July 24 and 3 p.m., in the church of San Sebastian, in the neighborhood of Tijuca, a great gathering of the whole Franciscan Family with the ministers and other general superiors of the different branches of our diverse family.

the Apostle in the presence of about three hundred Christians. The music ministry was organized by the Christians of Antioch and by a group of young Africans who live in Izmir. In the afternoon Br. Pio concluded the visit with a meeting where all the friars of the Custody were gathered: he encouraged them in the apostolic work they carry out and invited them to look to the future with confidence, suggesting the discernment of projects for a renewed evangelization; this will also allow the involvement of other Provinces in this land so precious to Christians all over the world.

The Delegation of Cuba passes to the province of Maranhão-Pará-Amapá

LAS FECHAS, Cuba – After more than two centuries of intense missionary work, the Province of Spain, by decree of the General Minister, passes responsibility for the Del-

egation of Cuba to the Province of Maranhão-Pará-Amapá, Brazil. The transfer took place at a special assembly of the delegation, celebrated from June 1 - 3, 2013. It was attended by the friars who work there, together with the delegate, Br. Antonio Martins, the Provincial Ministers: Br. Deusivan Santos (Maranhão-Pará-Amapá) and Br. Benjamin Echeverria (Spain), the General Definitor for Brazil, Br. Sergio Dal Moro and the General Definitor for the Spanish language, Br. Hugo Mejía, who read the decree of the General Minister and presided at the solemn Eucharist at which about twelve Capuchins concelebrated. Between the Spanish and the Brazilians, the Capuchins in Cuba are ten, present in four



fraternities and working in missionary service, in parishes, and in formation.

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Capuchins at the 'March for Life'

SEOUL – On June 8, 2013, nine Capuchin friars participated in the second March for Life in Korea, an event sponsored by the Pro-Life Alliance in the Yeouido Hangang Park in Seoul. Despite the heat, many people came together 'under the one umbrella' of defending life from its beginning to natural end: lawyers, professors, young people and Catholic religious, Protestants, Buddhists, and ordinary folks of all ages gathered outdoors near the Han River. The event was preceded by various preparatory 'warm ups,' and began properly with the talk of Father Casimiro and then continued with musical performances, dances, and testimonies.

This March for Life models itself somewhat on the March begun in the United States in 1973 to protest the le-



galization of abortion in that country. In Korea the first March was in 2012.