

Blessed Thomas of Olera and "the flame of our charism"

“Yesterday in Bergamo, Thomas of Olera, a Capuchin friar who lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was beatified. Let us give thanks for this witness to humility!” So said Pope Francis on September 22 during his visit to Sardinia, before the recitation of the Angelus. Now the memory of this lay friar of our Order will be celebrated by the Church every May 4. In his letters on the “New Blessed” of this past August 15, the General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri puts it this way: “The beatification of Br. Thomas of Olera, four hundred years after his birth, may come as a surprise! But the way his reputation for holiness has remained constant over time kept attention on his Cause for Beatification.”



What can join us to a figure so eminent, of a distant era but at the same time close to us in the quest for the same ideals? It will be, of course, that ardent love for the suffering Christ that Br. Thomas carried in all that he thought, said, and did. It is a love that must first be lived and only thereafter recounted, that illuminates like a burning lamp on the altar of his beloved, crucified Lord, from whose open heart Br. Thomas took strength and wisdom for himself and for so many people, from every rank and condition, those that found in him what they themselves sought: someone im-

passioned by the love of God! Like the fire of embers burning under the ashes of time, Br. Thomas has lasted through the centuries, until this moment a hidden treasure, but now, thanks to the wind of the Spirit that rushes in the Church, all will enjoy “fanning the flame of our charism” in this authentic son of the Poverello of Assisi.

In this time of challenge, the life of Br. Thomas is an exhortation to inflame the heart with passion for the Passion, because this is the sole and authentic furnace, in all times, wherein a Capuchin friar is made. The General Minister continues: “Br. Thomas of Olera lived in a complex period, full of contradictions and violent clashes, but also in a fascinating time that let shine through and shed light on the passion of man and his desire either to assert himself or to let God assert and show himself, visibly and tangibly. The Order had entrusted questing to Br. Thomas, the ‘seeking’ for the subsistence of the friars and the poor of the friary; grace transformed him into the sought-after advisor of nobles and servants, into the learned spiritual teacher who knew how to pronounce the word that pointed to the hidden Christ, as the true mystics and true contemplatives of the Mystery know well how to do.”

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New arrivals in the Curia

ROME, Italy – The renovation of the General Curia continues – not only the building at via Piemonte – but also in the arrival of new brothers to join this unique fraternity of the Order. The following brothers have come recently: **Br. Victorius Dwiardy** (Province of Pontianak, Indonesia), General Definitory; **Br. José Carlos Gubert** (Custody of Paraguay), Vice General Bursar and Bursar of the fraternity (both are currently at other houses in Rome for Italian study); and **Br. Jean Marcel Rossini** (Province of Sardinia), assistant to the Office of the General Postulator and Secretary for the French language (resident at the fraternity of Garbatella). Best wishes for fruitful service to all the new arrivals!



Meeting of the General Definitory

ROME, Italy – The seventh ordinary meeting of the General Definitory took place this past September 16-27. Among the most important topics the following are noted:

- 1) Reflections, considerations, and responses regarding the confirmation by CICALSAL of the Constitutions of the OFMCap presented to the Holy See on June 18, 2013.
- 2) Province of Pontianak, Indonesia: Br. Amandus Ambot appointed Provincial Minister in substitution for Br. Victorius Dwi-

ardy, General Definitory; Br. Egidius Egiono appointed 4th Provincial Definitory.

- 3) Appointments for the General Curia: Br. Antonio Belpiede, Province of Foggia – General Procurator beginning in January 2014; Br. Albert D’Souza, Province of Maharashtra, India – Vice General Procurator beginning in October 2013; Br. Aklilu Petros, General Viceprovince of Ethiopia – Secretary for International Economic Solidarity beginning in October 2013.



Communicating the faith on the "second screen"

The concept of the "second screen" is a new paradigm for interactive television (and not only television), that has arisen from the digitalization of TV, mobile telephony, and above all, the spread of the 'social network.' In these days there are many television broadcasters whose most watched programs have started in on this new "weaving of the web" in order to connect themselves to the audience, monitoring their feedback mainly through Facebook and Twitter. It is a phenomenon that newspapers are also experiencing; already almost all are in online versions and open to the comments of their virtual readers.

This means that just to watch the show isn't enough. Nor is it enough to send letters, emails, or make telephone calls or even to send text messages. The true audience of today is participatory and simultaneously evaluated. It is connected to the perception and the reaction to what happens on the TV screen and then to the immediate sharing on the web by means of the tools that are getting more and more portable and ever more accessible. Thus, the first screen gives way to the second, the third...

Testimonials give way to witness to the facts. Opinionatedness gives way to the re-reading of the account. Communication is no longer between a broadcaster

and a receiver; now we are a network that sends and another that receives and shares, comments, modifies, criticizes, and reshapes the message. And they are many who use these resources in politics and commerce. By now such resources of communication have become a way of life, taken for granted, such that it will be necessary to find the necessary approach via theology and technology, that the human being, God's search engine *par excellence*, might truly keep the "connection" with the One, even in this sea of common and virtual knowledge.

And this is a marvelous way to share the faith! Thus, this past January 24, Benedict XVI sent his message for this year's World Communications Day, the 47th, dedicated to theme: **"Social Networks: portals of truth and faith, new spaces for evangelization."** The theme was announced, as it is every year, on September 29, 2012, the feast of the Archangels Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel, the last being the patron of those who work in radio.

The Tablets of the Law can and should be on the tablets now found everywhere, the Pope noted. And the breath of the Spirit is suited to being spread by the

'tweet' of Twitter. The icon of the Word, whose "glory we have seen" (John 1:14) is illustrated in the shots of countless cameras and the Good News is spread by infinite clicks and comments, like a new and pressing reflection of the hyper-text of Him who makes his voice heard from on high: "This is my Son...listen to him." (Mt 17:5)

It has been said that 'new times require new temples,' because "The desire to know God truly, that is, to see God's face, is innate in every human being, even in atheists." (Benedict XVI, catechesis of 16.01.2013). This face, whose tenderness can be touched, we must "fish for in the peripheries and in the islands of the world," according to Pope Francis, who often uses such ordinary language of the common man of today in order to reach so many people, brushing up against the only 'button' that really connects us to God: the heart. So, the virtual ocean is full of real people to be fished; it calls urgently for a response. What are we waiting for in throwing out our nets and lowering ourselves into the web?



"I believe in the forgiveness of sins"

Third International Week of Reconciliation
San Giovanni Rotondo, 25-29 November 2013

Sanctuary of St. Pio of Pietrelcina
Pilgrimage Office
Tel. +39.0882.417500 - fax +39.0882.417555.
www.conventosantuariopadrepio.it
e-mail: info@santuariopadrepio.it
rettore@santuariopadrepio.it

General Secretariat of Formation OFM Cap
www.sgfofmcap.blogspot.com
www.ofmcap.org
e-mail: sgf@ofmcap.org

1st "Capuchin Founders Day"

GUAM (Marianas Islands and Hawaii) - Almost 400 guests made our 1st Annual Capuchin Founders Day a huge success. The monies raised at the dinner will go to help meet our obligations to the bank for the construction of the new friary, built in 2007.

The annual event is called "Capuchin Founders Day" because the first Capuchins who arrived on Guam came in August of 1901. Every August, a benefit dinner will be held with a different theme each year. As this was the first, the theme was the very first two friars to arrive on Guam.

A DVD presentation was viewed by all, explaining the reasons why two Spanish Capuchins came to Guam in 1901 to help the lone Chamorro diocesan priest who had to care for the entire island by himself.



Fr. Patrick Castro helped greet the guests as they arrived at Saint Francis School in Yona, where the dinner was held. Besides the great food and entertainment, there were prizes, quizzes and many items up for silent auction. A great time was had by all. Thanks to all our sponsors and many, many volunteers!

Ongoing formation in the Franciscan places

ITALY - From August 13-31, 27 brothers of CCMIS (India) and ASMEN (Middle East) participated in a Spirituality Course in the Franciscan places, promoted by the General Secretariat of Formation (GSF), to refresh the memory of Francis and Clare through the texts and places that are most significant for our Franciscan history. Having fraternity as the principal theme, we committed ourselves to hearing and experiencing the echo of the charism in order to nurture and guide the journey, not always easy, of life as lesser brothers.

The visit was extended also to some of the significant places of the Capuchin world: Camerino, Loreto, and San Giovanni Rotondo. On the last day of the course the General Minister and Vicar met with the group to share guidelines for refreshing our Capuchin-Franciscan identity. The participants observed that the most meaningful experience was the chance to practice fraternity at the very sources of our history; such will assist in seeing new horizons for fraternal life.

(Br. Jaime Rey and Br. Charles Alphonse - GSF)



Br. Thomas of Olera is Beatified

BERGAMO, Italy - On September 21, 2013, with the promulgation of the Apostolic Letter of our Holy Father Francis, the Capuchin from Bergamo, Thomas of Olera, was enrolled among the Blessed. Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, presided at the ceremony of beatification, Bergamo's first in the history of the Church.

Faith, charity, humility, poverty: these are some of the characteristic traits of the figure of Thomas of Olera (1563-1631) that were mentioned by Cardinal Amato in his homily - "a questing religious, an apostle without a stole, tireless preacher of the Gospel," but also "a counselor of the powerful and of sovereigns (for example, Paris von Lodron, Prince of Salzburg, Ferdinand II, Emperor of Austria, Archduke Leopold V, and Duke Maximilian I of Bavaria)." He was "a builder of churches and monasteries, a benefactor of farmers and miners, one who anticipated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption, precursor of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, apostle of the Counter-Reformation, a man admired for his humility, poverty, and holiness in Italy and in Austria."

Present at the ceremony, in addition to ecclesiastical authorities and Capuchin friars were many of the faithful, as well as civil authorities from Olera and from the cities of Rovereto, Thiene, and Innsbruck. To learn more about the life and work of the new Capuchin Blessed go to www.fratommaso.eu

Pope Francis in Assisi

ASSISI, Italy - It will be an intense day for the Pope in Assisi on the feast of the Saint that has inspired Bergoglio's pontificate. Francis will arrive by helicopter at 7:45 in the sports field of the Seraphic Institute that receives disabled young people from all over Italy. The first stop will be with them followed by the first Franciscan place, the church of San Damiano, the place of conversion where the Saint heard the voice from the Crucifix. After that the Pontiff has a significant appointment without precedent: the visit, in the archiepiscopal seat of Assisi, to the room of the "dispossession" that recalls the dramatic gesture of the young Francis before his father, Pietro di Bernardone. There the Pope will meet with some of the poor who are assisted by Caritas. He will then enter the church of St. Mary Major connected to the archbishop's house. Then, after the veneration of the relics of the Saint that are kept there, comes the Mass in the piazza in front of the Basilica of St. Francis. At the end of the Mass, there will be the lighting of the votive lamp with the oil offered this year by the Region of Umbria, and then lunch at the Welcome Center of the Caritas of the diocese near the railway station of Santa Maria degli Angeli. In the afternoon, the Pope will visit the hermitage of the Carceri, the place where Francis of Assisi and his followers retreated to pray and meditate, then a meeting at the Cathedral of San Rufino with the representatives of the whole diocese, currently carrying out its synod. Following that, there will be a private visit to the Poor Clares at the Basilica of St. Clare. At 17:30, after a silent prayer at the Portiuncula, the Pope will meet the young people in the piazza of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Then, before leaving, there will be a trip to the sanctuary of Rivo Torto with a visit to the hut of St. Francis. (*Vatican News*)

Death of Br. Francisco Iglesias OFM^{Cap}

SPAIN – Br. Francisco Iglesias, who served the Order for many years in the General Curia in Rome, has died at the age of 86. He was born on January 26, 1927 at Monleras (Salamanca), entered the Capuchin Order in 1942, made first profession on August 28, 1943, perpetual profession on February 1, 1948, and was ordained priest on March 4, 1950. In his home province of Castile, he carried out various assignments, including being elected provincial definitor (1960) and twice provincial minister (1963 and 1969).

Br. Francisco arrived in the General Curia after the Chapter of 1976, when he was elected General Definitor. Before this service he had been Rector of the International College. In 1982 he was elected General Vicar of the Order. In 1988 he was elected General Definitor once again. For many years he was General Procurator of the Order, president of the General Office of Formation (UGF) and was also president of the preparatory commission for PCO IV. During the years 1982-1988 he was a valuable and important presence in a series of conferences that had as their theme initial formation in the Order. Finally, he was an advisor to the General Minister and then returned to Spain in July of 2009. He passed to the Father's House on the morning of August 21, 2013. *Requiescat in pace.*



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2013 Meeting for Capuchin Library, Archive, and Museum professionals

ROME, Italy – According to well-reestablished annual tradition, the 2013 meeting for Capuchin Library, Archive, and Museum Professionals was held from September 2-7. This year's course saw a good number of participants signed up, and they enjoyed the hospitality and services of the International College 'San Lorenzo da Brindisi' in Rome. On Wednesday, September 4, the participants were able to meet with the General Minister, who expressed the gratitude of the Order for their valuable service. Br. Mauro then encouraged them to continue with professionalism and conviction in the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, and to make also the friars aware of this area of apostolate and spirituality.

The majority of the 36 participants in the initiative, Capuchin religious and lay collaborators, were Italian, but there were also those from Europe, North and South America, Africa, and India. Together they studied certain areas specific to their work. In particular, a common examination was made of the similarities and differences between the Latin tradition and the German and English-speak-

ing traditions, with specific reference to archival science as treated by Brian Kirby, archivist of the Province of Ireland, and of fundraising, treated by Elisabetta Pugliese, an economist and official in the Italian government. There was also the opportunity to update the various utilities of the Web Portal, the cumulative cata-



log of Capuchin libraries in particular, which now has 36 participating libraries, and the online registration for the Yearbook or Directory for the registry of Capuchin Cultural Institutions and Authoritative File of Capuchin authors (www.ibisweb.it/bcc). The course, as usual, was held in Italian and English.

(Br. Luigi Martignani, OFM^{Cap})

Course for new missionaries Brussels 2013

BRUSSELS, Belgium – The English-speaking Course for new missionaries began on September 1, 2013. The 'Our Lady of the Nations' fraternity welcomed the twelve brothers (Capuchins, Conventuals, and OFMs) who are preparing for their missionary destinations

in India, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and the Holy Land.

At the beginning of the three-month course was the meeting of the General Secretaries for missionary animation: Br. Jarosław Wysoczański OFMConv and Br. Massimo Tedoldi, OFM (the new Capuchin secretary was not able to take part), who explained the spirit of mission today according to the guidelines of the Franciscan family.

The Course, led by Br. Gianfrancesco Sisto, OFM, looks forward to treating many themes, including: the history and method of Franciscan mission, inter-religious dialogue, Franciscan missiology, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, European secularism, mission in Asia, the cultures and religions of Africa,

the fraternal economy in mission, and the role of leader.

At the end of the Course there will be a week of pilgrimage to Assisi and the Franciscan places in order to experience the desire to receive from the Poverello his own spirit and missionary ardor. The course proposes to be an influence in the formation of new missionaries not only by theoretical lessons, as interesting as these may be; in these three months, in fact, even the fraternal life is lived with a missionary sense with a simple lifestyle, availability for fraternal sharing of life experience, an intense prayer schedule, shared housework and some pastoral service, and visits with the poor and homeless that are welcomed by the Capuchin and Conventual friaries present in the city. (www.ofmconv.net)

