

FRANCISCVS

Pope Francis left this life for the Father's house

21th April

Pope Francis has died at 7.35 a.m. on 21st April, Easter Monday, in Vatican City. The Holy See communicated the news with a message that has deeply touched the hearts of the faithful throughout the world: "He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity,

courage, and universal love, especially in favor of the poorest and most marginalized. With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite merciful love of the One and Triune God".

He was born on the 17th December, 1936 in Buenos Aires to a family of Italian origin, who emigrated to Argentina in 1928 seeking their fortune, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Supreme Pontiff on the 13th March, 2013, taking the name of Francis, the first in history. In fact, he is a Pope very close to St. Francis of Assisi, to the Franciscan charism and to the Franciscan friars.

Immediately after the conclave, he himself recounted that during the ballot, as soon as the necessary votes for the election were obtained, his neighbour, Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, OFM, archbishop emeritus of São Paulo and a great friend of his, embraced him and told him: "Don't forget the poor." Francis never did. "How I would like a Church that is poor and for the poor! This is why my name is Francis, like Francis of Assisi," he said in his first press conference as Pope, remembering the Poverello-poor man of Assisi as a man of poverty, a man of peace, it was a way to pray for the dead who had been shipwrecked, but also to awaken our consciences to the suffering felt by so many men and women forced to leave their country of origin, arriving in foreign lands that do not welcome them, that forget them, that ignore their stories.

Pope Francis encapsulated his thoughts on human fraternity in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, taking up the words of St. Francis and signing it on the 3rd October, 2020 right on his tomb, in Assisi, to make it public on the 4th October, the liturgical feast of the saint.

In 2016 he established the World Day of the Poor, a "concrete sign" of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy that the Holy Father wanted to celebrate

in that year: a day so that every baptized person can reflect on how poverty is at the heart of the Gospel and that can encourage actions of solidarity towards the most needy, in every corner of the Earth.

So, to the Earth, to the care of Creation and to the common home, on the 24th May, 2015 he dedicated another encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, taking up the words of the Canticum of the Creatures that St. Francis wrote 800 years ago. By focusing on the concept of integral ecology, Pope Francis highlighted the interconnection between the environmental crisis and the social crisis of humanity, emphasizing the social, and not simply the "green," nature of the text. On the occasion of its publication, he also established the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which is celebrated every 1st September and begins the Season of Creation, which runs until the 4th October.

On the anniversary of the Saint of Assisi, in 2023, the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* was published, considered an "update" of *Laudato Si'*, which focuses on the climate emergency and global warming that is now undeniable, due to the "unbridled human intervention on nature over the last two centuries" (LD, 14).

Pope Francis has been close to the Franciscan friars several times, in a literal sense. We remember him [visiting the Porziuncola on 4 August 2016](#), on the occasion of the VIII Centenary of the Pardon of Assisi; in Assisi several times, as on the occasion [of the 2016 Prayer Meeting for Peace](#); in Greccio in 2019 for the release of his Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum*, focused on the meaning and value of the nativity scene; in

2016



2019



his surprise visit to [the friars of the of the Friary of Holy Land in Rome](#) in 2021. He has repeatedly invited the Ministers General of the OFM to the Apostolic Palace and has also received [the Franciscan Family in audience on the](#) occasion of the Franciscan Centenaries, which we have been celebrating since 2023.

On the other hand, [the rescript with which the Pope derogated can. 588 §2 of the Code of Canon Law](#) and the norms on the access of non-clerical religious, belonging to clerical Institutes of Pontifical Right (such as the OFM), to access

government offices at all levels, thanks to which lay brothers can also become major superiors, bears the date of the 18th May, 2022.

In the years of his pontificate, 4 OFM friars were created cardinals and 38 appointed bishops. He canonized the Martyrs of Damascus and beatified many friars and Sisters of the OFM, without ever forgetting his closeness to the Order on the anniversaries that are of interest to him, for example on [the 100th anniversary of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem](#).

Letter by the Minister General On the occasion of the death of Pope Francis



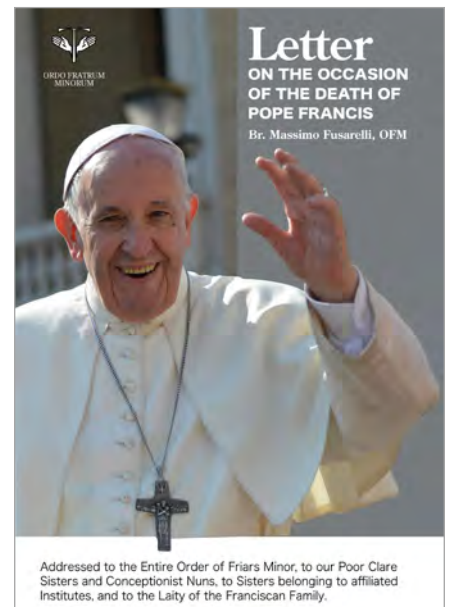
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Dear Brothers and Sisters,
May the Lord give you peace!

As I write to you all, my heart is filled with emotion and gratitude as the Church and the whole world mourn the death of Pope Francis, the first Pontiff to choose the name of our Seraphic Father. This choice, made on the evening of his election, revealed the direction of his pontificate from its very first moments; an ever-new return to evangelical simplicity, a Church that is close to the poor, and the primacy of mercy and of encounter with every human person.

Recent times have seen Pope Francis visited by serious “infirmity and tribulation” which have given us the opportunity to see how a Christian and a pastor meets “Sister Death.” This is a very precious testimony in a time of superficiality that tends to deny illness and death, and we are also grateful to him for his patience and for his praise of the Most High and Good Lord in all he endured.

Read the full text of the Letter:
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[Polski](#) - [Português](#)



2022



2024



Last Farewell to Pope Francis

St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City



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From Wednesday, the 23rd April until tonight, approximately 250,000 people in an atmosphere of faith and affection have made a pilgrimage to pay homage and say their last goodbye to Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

The death of Pope Francis, which occurred on Angel Monday, 21st April, 2025, has moved the whole world, who in the midst of great popular devotion bid him farewell, thanking him for his closeness and witness. As Br. Massimo Fusarelli pointed out in his [Letter addressed to the entire Franciscan Order and Family](#) on the occasion of the death of Pope Francis, the Pontiff lived his last moments as a true Christian witness, facing "sickness and tribulation" with patience and praise to the Most High, preparing for the encounter with "Sister Death" in a way that is profoundly significant for our time.

The faithful have shown their gratitude for a Pope who was always attentive to the least and

the marginalized of society. His choice to live in Casa Santa Marta to maintain contact with the people and his habit of celebrating Mass in prisons and reception centres are testimonies of his closeness to the people, which Br. Massimo in his letter described as "an ever new return to evangelical simplicity, to the Church close to the poor, to the primacy of mercy and to the encounter with every human person."

In these days of mourning, popular devotion is also manifested in the rosaries that were prayed during his last days and that continue to be prayed by the faithful, as the Church prepares to elect his successor in an upcoming conclave.

Francis has left "an admirable witness of humanity, of holy life and of universal fatherhood," as the Vatican points out on the official website, which is reflected in the love and respect shown to him not only by Catholics, but by people of all faiths.

A Letter from the Ministers General of the Franciscan Family

In memory of the Holy Father Pope Francis



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With hearts filled with gratitude but also with deep sorrow, we, the General Ministers of the Franciscan Family, wish to share with you our farewell to Our Holy Father Pope Francis, who has returned to the house of the Father.

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The funeral of Pope Francis

St. Peter's Square, April 26, 2025



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On Saturday, the 26th April, 2025, in St. Peter's Square, the funeral of Pope Francis was celebrated, with the presence of thousands of faithful from all over the world, religious leaders, priests, religious, heads of state and official delegations, the funeral rite was presided over by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals.

In his homily, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re particularly recalled the Pope's words: "Happiness is more in giving than in receiving," and stressed that "he was a Pope amongst the people with an open heart to all." In the end, he recalled that "Pope Francis used to conclude his speeches and meetings by saying: 'Do not forget to pray for me.' Dear Pope Francis, we now ask you to pray for us and from heaven bless the Church, bless Rome, bless the whole world."

At the end of the celebration, the first according to the new edition of the Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis desired by Francis himself and approved on the 29th April, 2024, the funeral procession departed from St. Peter's to the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the smallest of the four Papal Basilicas and the only one dedicated to the Virgin, for burial. In the atrium, about forty people includ-

ing the poor, homeless, detainees and migrants, each with a white rose, paid a last tribute to the "Pope of the poor."

The funeral rite was presided over by Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, Camerlengo, and concluded at 1:30 p.m.

It was Pope Francis himself who chose the place of his burial, in his Testament we read: "I wish that my last earthly journey will conclude precisely in this very ancient Marian shrine where I went to pray at the beginning and at the end of each Apostolic Journey to entrust my intentions to the Immaculate Mother and to thank her for her docile and maternal care. I ask that my tomb be prepared in the niche of the side aisle between the Pauline Chapel (Chapel of the Salus Populi Romani) and the Sforza Chapel of the aforementioned Papal Basilica as indicated in the attached annex. The tomb must be on the ground; simple, without particular decoration and with the only inscription: Franciscus".

Thousands of faithful accompanied the Holy Father, Bishop of Rome, to the end of his earthly journey through the streets of the city.



We join in the prayer of the whole Church, invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit, that in this Conclave a worthy Pastor of the whole flock of Christ may be elected.





Government of the Order

Br. Sipehelele Gwanisheni OFM elected new General Definitor *For the African Conferences*



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During the Tempo Forte session of March held in the General Curia, the Minister and the General Definitor elected Br. Sipehelele Gwanisheni, OFM as General Definitor for the African Conferences.

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Br. Sipehelele, currently Provincial Minister of the Province of "Our Lady Queen of Peace in South Africa" and President of the Anglophone African Conference, was born on January 4, 1979 in Bizana, South Africa. He began his novitiate on January 3, 2000, made his temporary profession on January 4, 2001 and his solemn profession on January 21, 2006; he was ordained on December 17, 2007. He has carried out various services in his Entity: he was a parish assistant, Bursar, Vocations Director; he obtained a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He was Novice Master, Secretary of Formation and Studies, Definitor Provincial, Minister Provincial, Conference Vice President and President, Lecturer of Sacred Scripture. He speaks English, Italian, French.

Br. Sipehelele takes over the service of our brother Mgr. Victor Luis Quematcha, OFM, General Definitor from July 2021 to March 8, 2025, the day on which the Holy Father Francis appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Bafatá in Guinea-Bissau.

To Br. Victor, our thanks for what he has done in the General Curia; to Br. Sipehelele, our welcome and our best wishes for a fruitful service for the benefit of the entire Order.

Establishment of the Custody of St. Jerome: visit of the Minister General to Croatia *Zadar, April 22, 2025*



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On the April 22, 2025, the Chapter opened during which the ancient Province of St. Jerome (Dalmatia and Istria), after a three-year journey, has become the Custody of St. Jerome, dependent on the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Zagreb, Croatia. At the beginning of the morning the President of the Chapter opened the meeting. The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and the Definitor General, Br. Konrad Grzegorz Cholewa were present; after the formalities, the Decree of Constitution of the new Entity was read.

Then, Br. Massimo Fusarelli addressed the Chapter, exhorting the friars, even in this humanly painful change, to remain “Pilgrims of Hope” and to seek, together with the Province of Zagreb, how to revitalize the life and mission of the Friars Minor in this vast territory.

Immediately afterwards, the capitular assembly proceeded to the church where the Decree appointing the Custos Br. Tomislav Sanko, OFM and the Council: Br. Stipe Nusic, OFM, Br. Tomislav Hrstic, OFM, Br. Diego Deklic, OFM, Br. Leopold Micić, OFM, Br. Pavle IVIC, OFM was read. Then they took their oath according to the prescribed rite. A solemn Eucharistic celebration allowed everyone to thank the Lord for His gifts and, in the paschal atmosphere of this week, to invoke His Spirit upon the journey of the newly established Custody of St. Jerome.

All the friars prayed in suffrage for Pope Francis. A fraternal agape concluded the morning. In the afternoon, the Minister General met with the Provincial Minister and the Definitory of the Province of Zagreb, together with the Custos and Council of the Custody of St. Jerome.



We entrust to the Lord the journey of this new reality of the Order, that it may bear fruits of renewal and evangelical vitality in the Franciscan witness in Croatia.

General Curia Agenda



☑ From the 5th-10th May in the General Curia there will be *Tempo Forte*. From the 12th-20th May, the General Definitory will meet with the new Provincial Ministers and Custodes.

☑ On the 10th May Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitor General, will participate in a day of the Chapter of his Province (St. Anthony of the Friars Minor – Italy), proposing a reflection on the themes addressed in the Chapter.

☑ From the 10th-16th May, Br. Fabio César Gomes, General Delegate pro Monialibus, will participate in Lusaka (Zambia) in the Assembly of the Bikira Maria Association, of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare of English-speaking Africa.

☑ On the 13th May, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will meet in Rome with professors from the Pontifical University Antonianum on the Council of Nicaea. From the 21st-23rd May he will participate in the Assembly of Superiors General in Sacrofano (near Rome).

A New Chapter of Mission and Hope: Strengthening the Franciscan Legacy in Japan

Br John Wong visiting Holy Martyrs Province



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In early March and April 2025, Br John Wong, Definitor General for Asia-Oceania, embarked on a series of visits to the Franciscan communities and missions of the Province of the Holy Martyrs in Japan. The brothers of this Province, who are preparing for their Intermediate Chapter in November this year, continue to honour their rich history of mission and service.



The visits of Br John began on March 2 in Tokyo, where he celebrated Sunday Mass with the parish community at the Franciscan Chapel Centre in Roppongi. After the Eucharistic celebration, he met with members of the local fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Franciscan Chapel Center, where masses are celebrated in Japanese and English for the local community, expatriates and visitors to Tokyo, is part of the legacy of Franciscan friars in Japan - a legacy rooted in decades of service and commitment to peace and simplicity.

From March 3 to 7, Br John visited Nagasaki, a city with a profound missionary history. Here, he spent time at the OFM Nagasaki Project, also known as the International Franciscan Community of Peace. In Nagasaki, Br John met with the local friars and the General Commission for the Service of Dialogue. They also visited historical sites of Hidden Christians and honoured the memory of Franciscan Martyrs. This segment of his visit underscored a deep historical connection between sacrifice and hope - a connection that serves as the very foundation of the Nagasaki Project.

In Osaka, during his visit on April 6-7, Br John engaged with friars, Japanese parishioners, and members of the Korean and Vietnamese migrant

communities. This meeting at the Osaka Friary was filled with conversation on the challenges posed by an aging membership and declining numbers within missions and pastoral ministries. Yet, amid these challenges, a spirit of hope prevailed. The dialogue focused on nurturing new vocations and the possibility of bringing fresh energy to the communities, mirroring the pioneering missionary spirit celebrated throughout the history of the Franciscan order.

The journey continued to Hokkaido on April 8-9, where Br John visited friaries and met with missionaries and ministry leaders in Sapporo and Asahikawa. This was the first visit by a member of the General government of the Order to Hokkaido since the visit of Minister General Constantin Koser, almost 50 years ago. In these northern regions, the warm hospitality of the communities and the steady determination to serve amidst hardships shone brightly. Br John's interactions further underscored the need for reinvigoration - a plea for new missionaries to join the ranks of those who have long been the heart of the Franciscan mission in Japan.

Concluding his series of visits, from April 10 to 12 Br John returned to Tokyo. He visited the OFM Provincial House and the Poor Clare Monastery in Kiryuu, culminating in a celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and a Vigil Mass for Palm Sunday at the Franciscan Chapel Centre. His presence in Tokyo served as a reaffirmation of the Province's enduring commitment to its core values - simplicity, humility, courtesy, and unwavering commitment.

The recent visits of Br John Wong, together with his companions Minister Provincial Br Augustinus Kuwata, Provincial Definitor Br Francis Furusato, and Communications Director Br Antonio Kim, were steeped in history and the spirit of mission, echoing the profound legacy of the Franciscan Order in Japan. Throughout the visits, the Provinces major challenges of ageing membership and few local vocations were evident.

As such, in between the visits of the Definitor General, the Japan Province celebrated particularly a joyful moment on March 30, 2025, with the priestly or-

dination of Br Luka Komito - marking the first local ordination in over ten years. This milestone signals not only continuity but also hope for the future.

As part of their spirit of hospitality and hope, the Province has also prepared a three-month exposure and discernment programme in Japan, for friars who may wish to serve as missionaries, inviting new vocations to be part of this long-standing missionary tradition.

Balanced between honouring its venerable past and addressing the challenges of today, the Province of the Holy Martyrs in Japan continues to stand as a symbol of resilience. The collaborative spirit seen during these visits reaffirms that the mission of service, simplicity, and sacrifice remains as vital now as ever - a call to all who believe in the transformative power of faith.

Elective Assembly of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference

Evaluation, Management and Prospects for the Future



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On the 8th and 10th April, 2025, the friary of St. Francis of Lima was the epicentre of an important meeting for Franciscan life in the Andean-Bolivarian region. The Elective Assembly of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference (CFB) was held, a space for reflection, prayer and decision-making crucial for the future of the Order in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

During three intense days, the participating friars not only dedicated themselves to discerning the Franciscan mission and contemporary challenges, but also thoroughly evaluated the activities and the achievement of the objectives established during the three-year period 2022-2025. This analysis made it possible to identify successes, challenges and lessons learned to strengthen future planning.

In a fraternal atmosphere of deep dialogue, the Assembly concluded with the election of the new leaders who will lead the CFB over the next three years:

President: Br. Marcos Saravia Orellana, OFM, Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Francis Solano (Peru).

Vice-President: Br. Ernesto Chambi Cruz, OFM, Minister Provincial of the Province of the Twelfth Apostles (Peru).

Secretary General: Br. Henry Arana, OFM, Provincial Secretary of the Province of the Twelve Apostles (Peru).

In addition, the heads of the various areas of animation of the Conference were designated and confirmed:

Secretary for Formation and Studies: Br. Juan Cancio Chávez, OFM, Province of St Francis Solano (Peru).

Secretary for Missions and Evangelization: Br. Óscar Castro, OFM, Province of St. Francis (Quito, Ecuador).

JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) Animator: Br. Jairo Santiago González Ortiz, OFM, Province of the Holy Faith (Colombia).

Animator for Educational Evangelization: Br. Juan José Alania, OFM, Province of the Twelve Apostles (Peru).



The Assembly was also an opportunity to express sincere thanks to the friars who have concluded their service in the presidency of the CFB: Br. José Alirio Urbina Rodríguez (outgoing president), Br. Jesús Barahona (outgoing vice president) and Br. Jorge Luis Torregroza Rojas (outgoing secretary), for their dedication and leadership during their tenure.

Br. César Kulkamp, OFM, General Definitor for Latin America, offered words of motivation to those present, urging them to continue to strengthen missionary collaboration, to discern the signs of the times and to keep alive the spirit of the Franciscan charism in the Bolivarian region. He also encouraged them to build on what had been achieved in the previous three years, hopefully

planning the lines of action for the future. The Elective Assembly of the CFB officially ended at 4:20 p.m. on the 10th April, with the blessing of the newly elected President and with the renewed commitment to continue to build fraternity and serve the mission in the Andean-Bolivarian context, strengthened by the evaluation of the recent past and with a clear vision for the next three years.

With the contribution of the SFBC Communications Office

Tempo Forte



Communiqué of the General Definitory concerning the March 2025 Tempo Forte.

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Reflections by Br. Massimo April 2025



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I was unable to travel in the last two months, but I maintained contact by telephone and messages, above all with the brothers who are in Ukraine, Syria, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Goma and Bukavu), in Colombia and in Myanmar after the tremendous earthquake in March. I was also able to communicate with several brothers in the Chapters of some provinces and custodies. I thought a lot that, in realities like these, we are called to grow as pilgrims of hope, not as lonely lighthouses. I think of the brothers of the two Entities in Ukraine who remain close to their people and suffer for the presence of family members and acquaintances at war. Despite the difficulties, they continue to celebrate the liturgy, distribute humanitarian aid, and spiritually accompany those who live the drama of the conflict.

In Syria the brothers have lived with all the tensions of this time and have not stopped supporting the life and hope of those who remain. Their communities have become places where many find not only material help – from the distribution of food and medicine – but also welcome and listening.

The same happens in Congo, where there is a lot of uncertain-



ty between Goma and Bukavu. In the postulant house in Bukavu, the brothers and postulants were attacked during a theft. Hearing them was strong for me. What struck me is their ability to transform this painful experience into an opportunity for a new beginning. The young postulants, although shaken by what happened, found in common prayer and in fraternal dialogue the strength not to give in.

In Myanmar, the brothers are well, far from the epicenter of the earthquake, and are working together to help those affected by the earthquake. In often prohibitive logistical conditions, they are trying to bring not only basic necessities but also that human closeness that restores dignity to those who have lost everything. In January, the brothers of the Province of São Paulo in Colombia made

themselves present among the internally displaced persons in the aftermath of riots and violence that, in the northeast of the country on the border with Venezuela, have produced thousands of refugees. Three brothers together are pilgrims among these people and accompany their journey in such a difficult moment.

Some provincial chapters are called to make difficult choices, yet the sense of walking together for the common good is slowly growing. I was able to see how the numerical decrease in some historical areas of our presence is paradoxically strengthening the awareness that only united and with new visions can we face the challenges of our time.

This era is teaching us that being pilgrims of hope means, first of all, recognizing our interdependence. We are not called to be lonely lighthouses that shine in the darkness, but rather a constellation of lights that, in their humble presence, illuminate the path of many. Our strength does not lie in individual heroism, but in community testimony, which does not want to dazzle with great projects, but illuminate with constant, patient, and lowing presence where darkness seems to prevail.

Chapters



Chapter of the Custody of the Protomartyrs of Morocco

Br. Luis Alcántara Ramírez OFM the New Custos



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From the 21st-25th April 2025, the friars of the Custody of the Protomartyrs of the Order in Morocco gathered to celebrate their Chapter. Currently, the Custody of the Protomartyrs is part of the Conference of North Africa and the Middle East (CON-AMO), recently created by the Order on the 17th March of this year. The Chapter officially began on the morning of the 21st with the Opening Mass at Our Lady of Peace Reception House in Rabat presided over by the Visitor General Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez OFM, Vicar General of the Order. Once in the Chapter Hall, after invoking the Holy Spirit by praying the Sequence of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the initial formalities, the Chapter entered into the matter with the reading of the Letter of the Minister General of the Order Br. Massimo Fusarelli, the presentation of the report of the Custos, the report of the Visitor and of the various heads of the different areas and working groups of the Custody. Without a doubt, one of the most significant moments at the beginning of the Chapter was the reading of the Letter of the Minister General. In the following days, taking into account the program of the Chapter, a space for dialogue and debate was opened amongst the friars through working groups to discern the path of the Custody around topics such as service to the Church in Morocco, the Franciscan presence amongst Muslims, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the service of charity and others. They were powerful moments of fraternity, full of exchange, welcome, clari-

ty in some tensions and commitments to the future. The elections were held on the morning of the 23rd April, in an atmosphere of prayer and recollection, the friars at the Chapter elected as the new Custos Br. Luis Alcántara Ramírez, of the Province of the Holy Gospel of Mexico, Br. Stéphane Delavelle as Vicar of the Custody and Br. Natale Fiumanó, Br. Simeón Stachera and Br. Jean de Dieu Bazibuhe Musaka as Councilors of the Custody. The chapter sessions have been alternating with crowded liturgical celebrations and moments of fraternity, elements that have fostered an atmosphere of prayer and communion. The following days will be dedicated to discernment and decision-making to give a renewed impetus to the life and mission of the Custody.



Let us pray for our chosen brothers and for their new ministry at the service of the Order and the fraternity!

Chapter of the Province of San Pedro Bautista

Philippines, 22-26 April, 2025



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From April 22 to 26, 2025, the Franciscan Province of San Pedro Bautista in the Philippines celebrated its 14th Provincial Chapter at Rosary Hills Conference Center, Brgy. Hoyo, Silang, Cavite.

In a spirit of fraternity and renewal, friars from communities across Luzon, as well as friars from St. Joseph Vaz Foundation - Sri Lanka and St. Francis Foundation - Myanmar, gathered for this important event of discernment and governance.

The Chapter opened with a solemn liturgy, followed by the approval of the *Ordo Capituli* and the election of additional Steering Committee members. The friars were also privileged to listen to Former Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio, who delivered a thought-provoking talk on the Philippines' national territory.

Over the following days, the friars engaged in profound reflections on their missionary vocation,

formation programs, financial stewardship, and the current socio-political realities in the Philippines, particularly the situation in the West Philippine Sea. A formal statement addressing these national concerns was discerned and approved, affirming the Province's commitment to truth, justice, and pastoral action.



One of the highlights of the Chapter was the election of the new Vicar Provincial and four Definitors, conducted in a spirit of prayer, fraternity and

mission: Br. Judee Mar Maquinad was elected Vicar Provincial, while Br. Mark Adame Bakari, Br. Dominador Valdez, Br. Pedro Roberto Manansala and Edwin Peter Dionisio were elected Provincial Definitors. They will lead the Province until 2028 together with the Minister Provincial, Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado. Special moments of prayer -including the reading of The Testament of St. Francis, the Franciscan Crown, and the Renewal of Vows - enriched the Chapter, grounding the friars' deliberations in the Franciscan charism.

The Chapter concluded with a Commissioning Mass, during which Br. Jose Fababair, OFM, was sent forth for mission to Hungary.

As the friars return to their communities, they do so renewed in their commitment to live as prophetic pilgrims of hope, embodying the Gospel of peace and fraternity in today's world.

Br. Nikko Sunga

Chapter of the Portuguese Province of the Holy Martyrs of Morocco

Br. José João Quintã Pereira elected Minister Provincial



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From April 21-25, 2025, the Chapter of the Portuguese Province of the Holy Martyrs of Morocco was held at the Capuchin Biblical Center in Fatima.

The Chapter, after listening to the letter sent by the Minister General, read and commented by Br. Cesare Vaiani, General Definitor for the CEM (Conference of Southern Europe), made a review of the past three years and developed proposals for the future, starting with the reports

of the Visitor, the outgoing Minister and those in charge of the sectors of life and evangelization of the Province. The Chapter also discussed and welcomed, with his own comments, the prospects of future integration, federation and unification with the three Provinces of Spain, based on what was proposed by the four Definitories of the Iberian Peninsula.

The Chapter, which became elective due to the sudden death of the previous Minister Br. Fernando Valente da Silva Mota, elected the new Government of the Province, formed by the following brothers: Minister Provincial: Br. José João Quintã Pereira;

Vicar Provincial: Br. Isidro Pereira Lamelas;

Definitors: Br. José Silvestre das Ramos Silva; Br. Manuel Nicolás Hipólito de Almeida; Br. Hermínio Gonçalves de Araújo; Br. Paulo Maurício Duarte Rodrigues; Br. José Pinto Pereira da Costa.

The light of the Easter Octave accompanied the work and prayer of the Chapter and will certainly accompany the processes of the coming years.

Solemn Professions and Provincial Chapter *Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (Italy)*



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“Here I am, Lord!” With this response to the call of the Lord, our brothers, Filippo Di Maio and Michele Pressano, stipulated their pact of love, through their solemn profession of the evangelical counsels. The newly professed, belonging to the Neapolitan Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (Italy) of the Order of Friars Minor, consecrated themselves forever to the Lord in the Pontifical Minor Basilica of Sant’Antonio di Padova in Afragola (NA).



The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Br. Carlo Maria D’Amodio, Provincial Minister, and attended by a large number of confreres of the Province, by a representation of the other Provinces of Campania, Basilicata and Calabria, by confreres of other religious families, by the family members of the newly professed and by a large number of faithful, was carried out in an atmosphere of prayer, recollection, and deep emotion: everything spoke of the greatness of God’s love. In thanking those present in his own name and on behalf of Br. Michele Pressano, Br. Filippo Di Maio shared what he kept in his heart, stating that saying “yes” to God was not only a choice, but a total abandonment, a letting oneself be loved to the end and then pouring the same love to the thirsty world. The presence of God, His Love and His tenderness has pushed them to recognize Him in smallness and fragility, giving them the

courage to open, without fear, their heart to Him. In the “yes” expressed with joy and full donation they have found the most authentic joy, the one that nothing can extinguish, because it is rooted in the One who is eternal.

To Br. Filippo Di Maio and Br. Michele Pressano, the confreres all wish them to follow Christ faithfully and with perseverance, in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi, to become brothers among brothers, instruments of peace and witnesses of the beauty of a crazy love that never ends.

In the following days, the Province celebrated its Provincial Chapter, which confirmed Br. Carlo Maria D’Amodio as Provincial Minister; elected provincial vicar, Br. Giuseppe Sorrentino; and provincial definitors: Br. Giuseppe Palmesano, Br. Mario Folliero, Br. Adriano Pannozzo and Br. Vincenzo Baldo.

Animation of the Order



Meeting of the Franciscan Network in Asia *For Peace and Integral Ecology*



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The Coordination Team of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia consist of the animators of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation) General Office in Rome, representatives of SAAOC and EAC Conferences, Franciscans International, Franciscan Secular Order (online), gathered on April 07-11, 2025, at the House of Silence-Retreat House in Cebu, Philippines.

At the meeting, the Network’s main priorities for the future were defined in response to the specif-

ic situation in the region. The aim was to follow up on some plans to further develop the parts of the network that comprise promoting peace, dialogue, advocacy, conscientization, community building and partnerships.

The meeting opened with a warm greeting from Br. Renee Dean OFM, Minister Provincial of St. Anthony-Cebu, Philippines, followed by reading a message from Br. Derrick Yap OFM, President of SAAOC. Then, a review of the Network’s activities from April 2024 to the end of March 2025

was addressed. Also presented were the Network in the Americas and the Mediterranean. In the light of *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, the Kota Kinabalu-East Malaysia Resolution 2024, the [Assisi Statement 2025](#), the Team reflected on what measurable programs will be undertaken.



In the region, many initiatives on peace have been undertaken over the years such as the Nagasaki Peace Project by the friars in Japan, the peace church between North and South Korea by the friars in South Korea, advocacy for West Papua as a 'land of peace' by the friars in Indonesia, dialogue as a bridge to peace in Manipur by the friars in India, and others.

In response to the current earthquake and on-going civil war in Myanmar, the members agreed that the beneficiary of the Network's program would be Myanmar, including humanitarian aid, support in housing construction, and then some activities and assistance for the victims of the war especially the migrants and refugees in Penang, West Malaysia.

Another concern of the Network is the need to animate the JPIC animators in Asia, both Franciscan religious and lay people. In light of the 800th anniversary of *The Canticum of the Creatures* and the tenth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, the members of the Coordination Team noticed that there is a need of some supports, reflection and training, for Asian JPIC animators, to sensitize them to the climate emergency issues through eco-pastoral programs in Indonesia as clear example and pilot project.

Finally, realizing that the activities of peace and integral ecology requires easy access to various activities of the Network, a digital form of the Network should be created so that this platform can be used by Franciscan family and the public as a means of sharing and learning in up-to-date information.

Visit of Br. Baptist D'Souza to the Indian Entities

February – March 2025



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In February and March 2025, Br. Baptist D'Souza, Delegate of the Secretary General for relations with the OFM Fraternitas Foundation, visited the 3 OFM Entities present in India: the Prov-

ince of St. Thomas the Apostle, which has the headquarters of the Provincial Curia in Bangalore (state of Karnataka), the dependent Custody of Mary Mother of God (Nagpur, Maharashtra) and St. Francis Foundation (Guwahati, Assam), for a total of 408 brothers (professed, temporary, novices and postulants). What may seem like a very small drop in the ocean (India has a population of about one and a half billion people), is actually a set of missions, stories, presences at the service of brothers and sisters in the faith and of the most needy people. In the state of Chhattisgarh, the Custody of "Mary Mother of God" has a mission

in Tilda, a city of about 26,000 inhabitants, where the friars are planning to build a school, and the land is cultivated. The friars of the Custody are also present in Umred, a city of about 50 thousand inhabitants in the district of Nagpur, state of Maharashtra, where they welcome aspirants from northern India – currently there are 20 led by 3 friars.

In the state of Madhya Pradesh, there is a large amount of agricultural land available in the Barul Mission: the goal is to activate various projects to help the local people by allowing them to cultivate the land.

Moving further south, in the state of Telangana, in the city of Hyderabad there is the Reddypalem mission, in which a small friary is being built inside the St. Lawrence school, which is also under construction.

St. Francis Foundation in the Northeast, has a very special history, starting with its geographical position. Located in northeastern India, it is nestled between Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar. In the state of Assam, the mission of Diphu has recently inaugurated a new school building, while the mission of Salbari, where the friars are engaged in education and pastoral ministry, the aspirants to the OFM are welcomed, this year in 35.

Moving further south, to the state of Meghalaya, the Mis-

sion of Nongjri sees the friars engaged in educational and pastoral ministry. The mission runs a school that welcomes Khasi tribal children from kindergarten to 10 years old, and a hostel that houses 140 children from economically poor backgrounds. The Province of St. Thomas the Apostle hosts on its territory, to be precise in Palamaner, State of Andhra Pradesh, the cradle of Franciscan formation in India. Here the friars take care of the novitiate, the House for Aspirants, the educational and pastoral ministries. The friars also support the education of children and provide medical assistance to the elderly and needy.

In the state of Kerala, in the mission of Chippilithode, the friars are engaged in pastoral and social ministries, and in agricultur-

al projects, with several jackfruit plantations. In addition, they continue to help and support those affected by last year's terrible landslide in Wayanad district, assisting and supervising the construction of houses and retaining walls for families.

In the Chundale Mission, also in Kerala, the friars are engaged in social ministry, working with tribal communities on tea plantations and following the construction of houses for them. In Madapurachal, the friars run a basic formation house for 29 students who are studying philosophy.

In the state of Tamil Nadu, in Chennai the friars of Nesakkaram are dedicated to the care of children, whilst in Nesavanam they hold various meetings for children and women.

News from the Entities



Life *in the Order*



Deceased Brothers

- † 21st April: Br. William (William Paul) Mann, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)
- † 19th April: Br. Carlo Cecchitelli, Custody of the Holy Land.
- † 16th April: Br. Onofrio Di Lauro, Prov. Sacred Heart of Jesus (Italy)

- † 13th April: Br. Salvatore Iannotta, Prov. Our Lady of Grace (Italy); Br. Remigije Mlinarić, Prov. Saints Cyril and Methodius (Croatia)
- † 11th April: Br. Janas Jacek, Prov. (from 2023) St. Benedict the African (DRC – born in Poland)
- † 9th April: Br. Winfried Prummer, Prov. St. Elizabeth (Germany)
- † 25th February: Br. Stjepan Knežević, Prov. Holy Cross (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Information received from the General Secretariat

Chile, meeting of OFM fraternities with parish service *Franciscan Province of the Most Holy Trinity*



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tween the Ongoing Formation and the Provincial Secretariat for Missions and Evangelization. The participation of the friars of the 10 presences that evangelize in Chile in the pastoral service of the Parish is appreciated: Parish of San Antonio de Padua (Iquique), Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary (Salamanca), Parish of St Francis of Assisi de la Alameda, Parish of Patronato St Anthony of Padua, Parish of St Francis de Assisi de La Cisterna (Santiago), Parish of St Francis of Assisi (Mostazal), Parish of St Francis of Assisi (Pararal), Parish of St Francis of Assisi (Concepción), Parish of St Buenaventure (Angol), Parish of Our Lady of the Candelaria (San Pablo) and Parish of St James the Apostle (Castro).

On Monday, the 7th April 2025, a Provincial Meeting of the fraternities that serve in parishes was held via zoom, moderated by Br. Jaime Campos, OFM, which had as its objective, in the context of the new time that the Franciscan Province of the Most Holy Trinity of Chile is experiencing, to restart a work of accompaniment and deepening of the pastoral service that the Franciscan brothers carry out in the Church in the context of the Parish. from the richness of the Franciscan charism.

This meeting took place taking into account the document "[Sent in fraternity and minority to serve in the Parish](#)", of the then General Secretariat for Evangelization, a subsidy of the year 2009 that is in the process of revision and updating with the contribution of all the friars. This document was presented to the friars by Br. Luis Alberto Nahuelanca, OFM.

It was a fruitful instance of reflection and new searches in order to take on in fraternity and minority the new challenges that this historical form of Franciscan evangelization presents. This meeting was coordinated collaboratively be-

Francesco Live *Florence (Italy), 10 May 2025*



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The second edition of "Francesco Live", the meeting of young people promoted by the Franciscan Family of Tuscany, will be held in Florence on the 10th May, which this year will be dedicated to the 800th Anniversary of the Cantic of the Creatures.

For info: www.vienievedi.net/francesco-live/

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OFM

Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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