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Pope Francis

by Massimo Rosina ofmcap

Pope Francis is a pastor who immediately entered the heart, into the fondness and the feeling of many, priests and laity. We were all struck by the little gestures he made: calling himself the bishop of Rome, the thought right away of his predecessor, pointing toward, according to the language of Vatican II, the primacy of the holy people of God, which is expressed in the local church. Having prayed together, having asked the blessing of the people gathered to welcome him, his blessing became like a response of faith and prayer that gives the sense of a strong communion between pastor and people. The beginning of the pontificate of Pope Francis has been full of gestures and words that have known how to make their way into the hearts of millions of people. One image was placed above all the



others, that of a poor church. Not only that, but a poor church also for the poor. It is an invitation that touches, along with the institution, each of us: the use we make of money, the simplicity and sobriety of our style of life, the generous sharing with the poorest. With his recalling of St. Francis of Assisi, "man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and cares for creation," he moves us to reflect on our model of development and the well-being of the western countries weighing on the planet in terms of environmental imbalances and conflicts engendered by economic interests. On the other hand, he reminds us with extraordinary effectiveness how much personal example can mean in terms of the power to convey the Good News to the world. And this is the mission to which, in the final analysis, we are called: to communicate Christ, that is, "the true, the good, and the beautiful 'in person.'"

Most Holy Father, Peace and all good!

With the well-known and simple greeting of the Franciscan tradition I address you, offering the greetings of every brother of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin on the occasion of your election, and assuring you of our prayers from this moment forward.

In your first encounter with the Church of Rome, looking out last night from the balcony of the Vatican Basilica, you invited us to walk together and to pray for

each other as a sign of brotherhood, love, and trust.

Thank you, Holy Father, for this invitation that we accept and make the commitment of our fraternity as Friars Minor Capuchin, to be a sign of that fraternity that Christ taught us in the washing of the feet of one another.

St. Francis of Assisi, in having us pray the last verse of the Canticle of the Creatures, helps us to pray for the realization of this great fraternity: "Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with

great humility." Where there is praise pleasing to the Lord there is thanksgiving for his love manifested in the Cross, united to humble service to the men and woman of every time and place.

Holy Father, assuring you of our filial obedience and our daily prayer to the Lord, I ask you to bless the Capuchin friars.



Happy Easter!

Meeting of the General Definitory... (continued on p. 3)

ROME – The General Definitory met from Monday, March 11 to Wednesday, March 20. After sharing information about activities carried out since the January meeting, the Definitory concentrated its attention on a wide variety of subjects. The issues of the day are many and complex, and to them had to be added other items beyond the agenda.

These are the most noteworthy decisions:

Circumscriptions:

- The Province of Maranhão-Pará-Amapá will assume responsibility for the Delegation of Cuba, beginning June 1, 2013.
- The date for the unification of the Provinces of Alexandria

and of Piedmont was accepted for May 9, 2014.

Appointments for the General Curia and houses dependent on the General Minister:

- Br. Dariusz Mazur, PR Krakow and Br. Manuel de Gama Santos, PR Bahia-Sergipe, for fraternal service in the General Curia, beginning April 1, 2013,

- Br. Ravi Rosario Irudayanathan, PR Northern Tamil Nadu, bursar of the house in Jerusalem, beginning April 1, 2013,
- Br. Benedict Ayodi, VG Kenya, Secretary of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Ecology,



Take a look at the candles before the Virgin Mary in the courtyard of "Our Lady" (Liebfrauen) by the entry door of the "Francis Gathering." Advent is always now: the door is open every weekday and even on holidays. And for us friars and our co-workers in the "Gathering," God always arrives too, often making us marvel at our grateful guests, who in poverty know how to keep their dignity. Every day is like Christmas: in the church of Our Lady those who receive become those who give, benefactors of the "Francis Gathering." In the center in Frankfurt there is a little "hotel," in which our poor and homeless brothers are welcome. About 160 come each day.

This year we are particularly joyful: with the seasons of Advent and Christmas of 2012, "Our Lady" begins the jubilee marking the twentieth anniversary of the "Francis Gathering." Br. Wendelin, who died in 2010, wrote this of the beginning of his work: After a brief period of training in Stuttgart I began my new work on November 24, 1992.

Without the energy of the founder we would not have this place of welcome characterized by trust for poor and homeless people, who come to the church of

"Our Lady" in search of food and concrete help. Every day we experience what Br. Wendelin once said: When God sends us the poor, then he also takes care of them.

Passing on God's gifts

Br. Wendelin considered "Our Lady" as a place of God's own charity. He had chosen the Capuchin life in order not to have anything for himself, but to live only for God and his children. His daily prayer in church bound him to those who, day after day, came to "Our Lady" to find "peace on earth" in the "tent"

by Paulus Terwitte ofmcap
Director of the "Francis Gathering"

"When God sends us the poor, then he too takes care of them"

20 years since Br. Wendelin founded the "Francis Gathering"

of God, far from the noise of the "camps" of city life. So down to today for Br. Wendelin and for us Capuchins it is a miracle to be able to prepare a table each day for people who are poor and homeless.

A place that gives hope

The "Francis Gathering" is one of many places that give hope. We Capuchins together with about 1700 benefactors reweave the worn out garment of trust of those who come to us. They who find the way to the door of welcome in front of the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, who have known God in poverty and flight, they don't have to tell us their names. You don't ask them about their story. Instead: hot coffee or hot chocolate, fresh bread.

Often also some jam or sweets that our dedicated supporters bring

right from their own homes. Kind coworkers in housework and decent men and women serving at table are renewed in the light of beautiful experiences of times forgotten. At least for a moment we wish to pick up the broken threads of trust. At the "Francis Gathering" this happens without any pressure. Each one can take his time. And with the faithfulness of



the benefactors we wish to offer such a space where trust can grow. In this way the bread given freely and without any obligation leads not a few to try again a new step out of difficulty. For us, the fact that all our guests have to pay 50 cents is part of the freedom: such a small contribution says to our guests that they are indeed our guests and that their dignity is respected.

Blessed are those who share

On June 21, 2013 at "Our Lady" we celebrate the 20th year of the "Francis Gathering." We are happy that our bishop Franz-Peter has promised to be present that day. In the preceding weeks four important conferences will be held at "Our Lady" to highlight the strength and commitment of Christian love of neighbor. At the same time We Capuchins will prepare a foundation with which we want, together with you, to continue to work of Br. Wendelin at the church of Our Lady after these 20 years of its existence. The poor and homeless that come to us must always find an open door and a table set, because God takes care of them.



Arrivals and Departures

ROME, Italy – In the month of March a new brother was added to the fraternity of the General Curia: Br. Francisco Lopes De Sousa Neto, of the Province of Ceará and Piauí. He takes the place of Br. Hermínio Bezerra, of the same Province, in the work of Secretary for the Portuguese language. During these past years he was a student at the International College specializing in Theology of Communication at the Pontifical Lateran University. Br. Hermínio left Rome on March 20 to return to Brazil.



The Order in Numbers

ROME, Italy – From the statistics office we get some data on the Fraternity of Capuchin Friars. As of December 2012 there are 10,286 Capuchin friars (compared to 10,364 in 2011). Some details: 625 postulants, 367 novices, 1,490 temporarily professed, 8,796 perpetually professed. We have one brother Cardinal among 91 brother bishops. 208 Friars have died. The Capuchin Friars, present in 108 countries are distributed in the various geographical areas: 1,357 in Africa, 1,657 in Latin America, 664 in North America, 2,339 in Asia-Oceania, 3,500 in Western Europe, 769 in Eastern Europe. The world-wide Fraternity is structured in 81 Provinces, 9 General Viceprovinces, 17 Provincial Viceprovinces, 17 Custodies, 8 Delegations, 24 Houses of Presence, and 13 Conferences of Provincial Ministers. We must listen to how the numbers speak to understand the historical moment of our Family; above all to boldly promote the culture of collaboration and to seek with clarity the paths that will let us deepen our life.

Closer to the Unification of Trent and Venice

THIENE, Italy – About 200 friars, on two separate days, March 21 and 22, 2013, participated in the third interprovincial Assembly of Venice and Trent. The General Minister, Br. Mauro Jöhri, presided, with the presence of the Provincial Ministers, Modesto Sartori and Roberto Guenin, and the General Definitior for Italy, Br. Raffaele Della Torre.



After the opening prayer, Br. Massimo Lorandini, president of the Commission for the unification of the Provinces, presented the work carried out up to now on the various aspects of the life of the two Circumscriptions. Br. Antonino Butterini and Br. Flaviano G. Gusella, on March 21 and 22 respectively, presented on the values of unification and Br. Robert Tadiello on the path of initial and ongoing formation, also in the Province of Milan and the other Provinces of northern Italy. Br. Dario Zardo explained, in broad outline, the historical path of the respective Provinces, pointing out the administrative and legal aspects for arriving at the proclamation of the new Province in 2014. The reports concluded with the presentation of Br. Roberto Donà and Br. Guido Felicetti on the missionary aspect of the two Provinces, highlighting what has been done and plans for the future. After the break, Br. Matteo Ghisini, Provincial Minister, and Br. Adriano Parenti, Provincial Bursar of the Province of Emilia-Romagna, on the 21 and 22 respectively, offered their experience on the reunification of the Provinces of Bologna and of Parma. The afternoon was taken up by the report of the General Minister and by the dialogue with the Assembly.

... Meeting of the General Definitory beginning July 1, 2013,

- Br. Umberto Losacco, PR Genoa, Secretary for Italian, beginning May 1, 2013,
- Br. José Carlos Gubert, PR Paraná-Santa Catarina, Vice General Bursar and Bursar of the General Curia from April 1, 2013.

General Formation Council. The following friars were appointed: Br. Eduard Rey i Puiggros (PR Catalonia - CIC), Br. Christi Francis V. (PR St. Thomas Kerala- CCMSI), Br. Evandro Aparecido de Souza (PR Paraná-Santa Catarina - CCB), Br. Guadence Aikaruwa Shayo (PR Tanzania - EACC), Br. Juan pablo Lobos Mendoza (VG Guatemala-Honduras-El Salvador - CONCAM), Br. Giampiero Cognigni (PR Marches - CIMPCap), Br. William R. Hugo (PR. Calvary - NAPCC), Br. Kilian Ngitir (CU Cameroon - CONCAO), Br. Clarence Hayat (VP Pakistan - ASMEN), Br. Andrzej Baran (PR Warsaw - CECOC), Br. Richard Sinaga (PR Pontianak - PACC), Br. Adrian Curran (PR Ireland - CENOC), CCA.

Renovation of the Curia. The members of the commission for the renovation of the General Curia were reappointed, with the exceptions of Br. Sidney Damasio Machado and Br. Ephrem Bucher. In addition, another commission was established for the renovation of the curia chapel: Br. Pio Murat, Br. Domenico Donatelli, and Br. Marek Przewczewski.

Economic Commission. The following friars were appointed: Br. Mark Schenk, Br. Luis Eduardo Rubiano, Br. Giampiero Gambaro, Br. Gianmaria di Giorgio, and Br. Piero Vivoli.

Group for the “new planning”. A group was constituted for reflection on possibilities for the houses dependent on the General Minister: Br. Christophorus Goedereis, Br. Alejandro Núñez, Br. Francesco Colacelli.

Jerusalem House. The church will be consecrated on February 2, 2014. The Patriarch of Jerusalem will preside at the celebration. The feast of the house was set for June 26, the feast of Bl. Jacob of Ghazir.

Constitutions and Ordinances. The work on the text of the Constitutions was completed with the consideration of suggestions of the juridical and editorial commissions. In a short time the text will be handed over to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

News from Central Africa...

GOFO, Central African Republic – The political and social situation, above all in the area of Gofu, is of increasing concern, to the point that our missionaries may not be able to stay. Some of the rebels, in fact, have not agreed to respect the agreements and therefore are preparing to

...News from Central Africa

continue with violent actions. Already in the last three weeks the mission at Gofu has been visited by the rebels on two nights. Here is what Br. Serge Mbremandij, Viceprovincial Minister of Chad-Central African Republic, writes to us:

Peace and good, brothers.

As you know through the media, the country is in trouble. A new strongman has declared himself, but there is still a long way to go. Unfortunately, misdeeds are reported from all sides: looting, abductions, witch hunts. There has been a lot of damage to property. The country, already beaten down, now finds itself underground. As for the friars, especially the fraternity of Gofu, which was the hardest hit, the friars were "visited" several times. During these "visits" there were stolen three cars, two laptops, and the sum of 2 million CFA (about 4,000 USD). The friars were terrified, exhausted, and stressed... Fr. Damiano, of the Province of Emilia-Romagna, who experienced the first "visit" while we were in chapter, came to Bangui for a week before the final assault of March 14. He is now in Italy. Currently there are still four friars in Gofu: Valentino Vallarino, Antonio Triani (the two Italians), Rolland Bawene (of Central Africa) and Valentin Mbatmegue (of Chad). The priests of Batangafo (ten kilometers from Gofu) have joined them and together they are staying close to the people in their sufferings. The other missions are quiet. The fraternity of Bangui (Bimbo) has not yet been "visited." Other communities of priests and sisters have received "visits" from the people of SELEKA. Remaining in place are our friars Christophe, Aristide, and Martial and we are in continual contact with them. At Bouar, the amount of noise made it clear that SELEKA could eventually arrive, but up to now nothing has been seen. However, the information frightened the sisters in the center of Bouar, who came to us Sunday evening in St. Laurent: The Poor Clares, the Sisters of Charity, the Polish sisters at the community center. Here it is calm, but one can still see fear in their faces. Our fraternities of Bocaranga, Ndim, Ngaoundaye are quiet. This, brothers, in short, is the situation and how we continue to live in this country. We ask you to keep us in your prayers that there might be true peace in this country.

Prayers for Christians

PAKISTAN – Br. Clarence Hayat, Viceprovincial of the Capuchins in Pakistan, has asked us to pray for the Christians of his country, who have undergone many acts of violence in these past days. The events were followed by protests to demand that the government of Pakistan provide justice and peace for religious minorities.

I invite you as a Capuchin

MEXICO – Taking up the social networks as a tool of evangelization, Br. Néstor Wer, of the Mexican Viceprovince of Capuchin friars, has launched the initiative, "I invite you as a Capuchin," which seeks to be a Franciscan presence on the digital continent, a means of interaction between religious and laity fostering unity and to be a space to know the life of some Capuchin friars, leading to communion and a way to spread the

Capuchin-Franciscan charism as an authentic expression of the Gospel.

Through a series of interviews he wants to create a dialogue that leads to the truth and authentic values of our Catholic Church, starting from the witness of each of the Capuchin friars invited. The friars reflect on our Franciscan-Capuchin charism in many ways.



To see the interviews visit: <http://ofm-cap.blogspot.mx>

Assembly of the Provincial Ministers of the Four Franciscan Families of Italy

LORETO, Italy – From February 25 to March 2 was the XXXVIII Assembly of the Provincial Ministers of the four Franciscan Families of Italy (19 OFM, 13 Conventuals, 21 Capuchins, 2 TOR). The theme of the meeting, on the new evangelization in the Year of Faith, "With Francis... Catholic and Apostolic: a challenge for us today" was treated by two presenters. During the 5 days, the Ministers met with the speakers and deepened the content and themes proposed in an exchange with their own experience. There was also a Marian liturgy at the Holy House, at

which Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci presided. The assembly reappointed



for another three years the outgoing Secretary and on the last day held the general assembly of the Franciscan Movement of Italy.

Four Franciscan Cardinals at the Conclave



VATICAN CITY – There were three OFM Cardinals present at the recent conclave: Claudio Hummes, Carlos Amigo Vallejo, and the South African Wilfred Fox Napier. Next to them was another Franciscan, though a Capuchin, Seán Patrick O'Malley, a significant figure in the episcopate of the United States.

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