



Letter of the General Minister
fra Mauro Jöhri OFMCap

OUR HOUSES IN CITY OF ROME

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OUR HOUSES IN CITY OF ROME

Prot. N. 00454/14

TO ALL THE PROVINCIAL MINISTERS AND CUSTOS OF THE ORDER

*Dear Brothers,
May the Lord give you peace!*

With this letter I want to share with you and with all the brothers of the Order the path of examination and reflection that with the General Councilors we have begun on the use of our houses in the city of Rome. The reflection has examined:

- The General Curia on via Piemonte
- The house of Garbatella
- The friary of St. Fidelis (house of hospitality) on via Cairoli
- The International College 'San Lorenzo da Brindisi.'

We have charged three of our brothers, Br. Alejandro Núñez Ennabe of the General Custody of Guatemala-Honduras-El Salvador, Secretary of Solidarity, Br. Francesco Colacelli, Provincial Minister of Foggia, President of CIMPCap, and Br. Christophorus Goederis of the Province of Germany, to make an accurate examination of the structures in question and to present some proposals for the use of the same. The purpose of this work is twofold:

- To utilize better the structures and spaces at our disposal
- To obtain an income to dedicate to the management of the current expenses for the maintenance of the houses and Cultural Institutions present in Rome such as the fund of study burses for the students of the International College, the Historical Institute, the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality, the Lexicon Capuccinum, the reviews *Collectanea Franciscana*, *Laurentianum*, *Bibliographia francescana*, the Archive, the Central Library, and the Museum.

Facing current costs, we are witnessing a significant reduction in the contributions on the part of many Provinces that have always sustained the central fund of Solidarity. The causes of this decrease are noted and described in the letter "*The Grace of Working*" (n. 3). The question is born spontaneously: What can we do? Which solutions can we adopt to manage the situation described?

I consider it opportune to point out that among the solutions suggested and that I describe there is not foreseen any sale of current buildings in Rome, while respecting the decisions made during the sexennium 2000-2006, confirmed by the preceding Council and by the current Administration of the Order, to sell a portion of the land of the Collegio 'San Lorenzo da Brindisi,' and to use a part of the proceeds to pay off debts that already exist.

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE 'SAN LORENZO DA BRINDISI.'

This structure, of considerable size, is the location of various realities of our Order: the Community of the students and of the resident family, the Historical Institute, the Archive, the Library, and the Museum. During the work of renovation of the building on via Piemonte, set to be completed, a part of the Collegio became the location of the fraternity and offices of the General Curia.

WHAT ARE THE URGENT REASONS FOR PROPOSING A LEASE OF A PART OF THE COLLEGIO?

The number of students is in progressive decline; if in the academic year 2011-2012 the students were 122, in 2013-2014 the number went down to 90 and for the coming years a further decrease is foreseen. As noted above, there is recorded a consistent decrease of the study burses offered by the Circumscriptions of the Order to support the studies of friars coming from Provinces and Custodies that are not able to assume all or part of the costs relative to the total maintenance of confreres sent to Rome for studies. Currently we can count on only 10 Circumscriptions that offer study burses and therefore for some years it has been necessary to have recourse to reserve funds to make up the missing portion for coverage of the total expense; said share in recent years has amounted to more than 1,200,000 euro (one million two-hundred thousand). The decrease of the students present in the Collegio does not correspond to a decrease in the ordinary expenses of its management, which because of the large structure remain practically unchanged. When the friars of the General Curia return to via Piemonte, half of the rooms (about 130), all equipped with a bathroom, will be uninhabited. The situation described imposes upon us some kind of decision, which could appear radical, but that with my Council I consider to be reasonable and responsible.

The project. After the analysis I will describe the idea that we intend to pursue. The Library, the Archive, and the Museum will continue their service in the current spaces dedicated to them. All of the portion of the structure that houses these realities above mentioned will remain at our disposal and in it will be able to live the members of the Historical Institute, the friars charged with the direction of the Collegio and the professors who teach at the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality. The welcoming of students will continue, who can enter the Roman Universities and Institutes and to this end we foresee the reservation of 50 rooms. The Church will remain at our disposal. We want on the other hand to seek a solution of rental for all the central part of the Collegio; the income coming from which will contribute to maintain the costs relative to the cultural and fraternal realities present in the Collegio and listed above. We consider this solution urgent and we do not want to wait for the number of students to diminish further; therefore we want to try and encourage a reasonable decentralization of studies in other places. Currently there are students coming from various Circumscriptions that have found fraternal hospitality at our houses in Paris, Münster, Freiburg, and Vienna, just to name a few. This welcome of our students can be broadened and encouraged at other fraternities in cities where there are universities and theological faculties, opening new and meaningful opportunities to international fraternal collaboration. This type of solution will allow the friars that dedicate themselves to study to live in smaller environments, with more meaningful fraternal dynamics and relations. The implementation of these projects will carry with it the revision of the plan of the distribution of study burses and the updating of the statutes of the Commission responsible for them. It will be necessary to identify and contact the various study sites with their respective directors to begin the equitable distribution of students.

WHAT IS THE TIMING OF IMPLEMENTATION?

It is not easy to make a prediction, but we believe that we must begin immediately in searching for parties interested in a lease of the central portion of the Collegio, studying in detail the appropriate partitioning and divisions that allow a decent continuation of the presence of the friars and of our activities. This intervention on the central part of the Collegio remains an established decision which we intend to finalize with determination and perseverance.

THE OTHER HOUSES.

The Garbatella house. Can house a small fraternity that together with the commitments of individual friars guarantees the religious and spiritual assistance to the Community of Capuchin Poor Clares.

The friary – House of hospitality ‘St. Fidelis’ on via Cairoli. For the moment we do not foresee another use. This house would require a series of substantial and burdensome interventions for the adjustments foreseen by law in view of broadening hospitality to the laity, fulfilling all the tax laws in force. We do not intend to proceed in this direction. At the same time it does not appear urgent to find a solution for this house and for the coming year its activity will continue in the current way.

The General Curia. The renovated building will make available a little more than fifty rooms and will be able to accommodate friars traveling for the various commissions and visiting ministers. After a first year of testing the fraternal and environmental dynamics, we will evaluate in what way the offer of hospitality can be broadened.

The friary of Frascati. The friary remains on contracted loan to CIMPCap, which uses the structure as the headquarters of the Conference and for meetings related to it.

The houses of Roman Province. In the city of Rome there are three friaries belong to the Roman Province: Immaculate Conception on via Veneto, San Lorenzo al Verano and St. Felix in the neighborhood of Centocelle. In the near future will be studied some way these could offer hospitality to the friars who for various reasons have need of a stay in Rome.

Dear brothers thank you for your attention. I ask you to bring the content of this my letter to the attention of the friars of your Circumscriptions.

Fraternally,

Br. Mauro Jöhri
General Minister OFM Cap.

Rome, 13 June 2014, feast of St. Anthony

