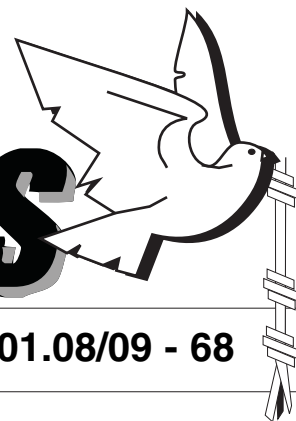


FRATERNITAS



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Studies in the life and mission of the Friar Minor

Introduction to Ratio Studiorum

The vocation and the mission of the Friar Minor consist of closely following the footsteps of Jesus Christ and of radically living the Gospel according to the way of life and Rule of St. Francis cultivating the spirit of prayer and devotion, living in fraternal communion, giving witness to minority and poverty, filling the earth with the Gospel and preaching reconciliation, peace and justice, in the bosom of the Church.

Franciscan formation, based on the personal encounter with the poor and crucified Jesus Christ, gives solidity to the vocation, pre-

pares for mission and leads to the development of the physical, psychic, moral, intellectual and spiritual gifts of the friar in an organic, gradual and coherent way.

Study, as an "expression of the unquenchable desire for an ever deeper knowledge of God, the source of light and of all human truth" (VC 98), is fundamental to the life and formation, whether on-going or initial, of every Friar Minor.

As an intellectual activity, study leads not only to learning science and doctrine, but above all to achieve wisdom of spirit and to al-

low oneself be possessed by the Truth and the Good, in order to love and praise the Lord to whom belongs all good and to serve the brothers in the charity of Christ.

The *Ratio Studiorum O.F.M.*, shows the reason, the orientating principles, the meaning and purpose of studies in the life and mission of the Friar Minor and contains the particular elements and the programme of his intellectual formation, especially in regard to the Franciscan units.

Plenary Council of the Order

Why a Plenary Council?

The Plenary Council of the Order was instituted by the General Chapter of 1967, thereby giving to the Order a collegial institution with the purpose of helping the General Government in the animation of the Order and to promote relations between the Conferences and the General Curia. Initially an annual celebration of the PCO was thought of, with the exception of the General Chapter year. Now the convocation of the PCO is provided for on at least one occasion during the six-year period and any time the majority of the Conferences may request one.

Unlike the General Chapter, in which the members are there on the basis of their office, that is, the General Government and the Ministers, the participants in the PCO are fewer and are elected by the Ministers of the Conferences on the basis of the number of friars resident in the territory of each Conference and not on the basis of the numbers of Entities (Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Custodies, Federations, etc.). This makes the participation of friars on the basis of the

topic of the PCO possible and not merely for reasons of office.

Another difference between the Chapter and the PCO lies in its power. While the Chapter exercises supreme authority in the Order, the Council is a consultative body and has power of decision only in those matters that are required of it by the General Chapter.

The first PCO was held in the General Curia from the 2nd June to the 5th July 1968. The ninth and last PCO was held in Malta, from the 8th to 20th May 1995. The next PCO will be held in Mexico (Guadalajara) from the 5th to 17th November 2001. The principal subject, requested by the General Chapter of 1997, is the revision of the structures of the Order.

Ministers Provincial

Br. Francisco García Rodríguez,
Betica Province, Spain.

Br. Benedikt Grimm (re-elected),
Province of St. Anthony, Germany.

General Curia

Br. Juan Rosas López, of the Province of Sts. Francis and James (Mexico), at the disposition of the Minister General in Rome since the beginning of the year, has been assigned to the Fraternity of the General Curia.

Commitments of the minister general

3-15th September
Rome, "tempo forte"
of the General Definitory.

10-13 September
Rome, meeting
with Visitators General
nominated during 2001.

21-29 September
fraternal visit
to the Provinces
of Bolivia and Ecuador.

News/big and small

- The V Meeting of General Visitors with the Minister General and his Definitory will take place in the General Curia in Rome from the 9th to 13th September.
- The President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, at the suggestion of the Minister for External Affairs, Lamberto Dini, has conferred the Honour of Grand Officer of the Order of "The Star of Italian Solidarity" on Br. Michele Piccirillo, of the Custody of the Holy Land, a scholar in Biblical Archaeology, author of essays on the Christian presence in Palestine, professor at the Franciscan Biblical Institute of Jerusalem.
- Br. Justin Bellerose has died in Montreal at the age of 97 years and 10 months (75 of religious life and 69 of priesthood), a missionary in Japan and later founder of the mission in Korea, cradle of the present Province of the Holy Martyrs of Korea. The Minister Provincial of Korea, Br. Leonard Kim, participated in the funeral rites celebrated in the Franciscan Church of Montreal on the 15th May.
- The TOR, during its General Chapter in the month of May in Ariccia, near Rome, elected a new Minister General, Br. Ilija Zivkovic, of the Province of

St. Jerome in Croatia.

- There are 41 Friars Minor OFM working full-time as military chaplains. 26.9% of Friars Minor work in parishes and 13.6% give their services in sanctuaries.
- The 119 Entities of the Order serve 1896 parishes. 35.4% of these parishes are cared for by one Friar. 102 Friars live and work alone in parishes. Only 42 Entities have a Provincial evangelising project, 66 have no plan and 11 Entities did not reply to the relevant question in the questionnaire sent by the Commission "The Franciscan Parish".
- The Holy Father canonised the Capuchin Bernardo da Corleone (1605-1667), model of humility, penance and prayer in the everyday simplicity of the convent in St. Peter's Square on Sunday 10th June. His almost exclusive duty was that of cook and assistant cook. But he also interested himself in the sick and he carried out many other works in order to be useful to all.
- The two Catholic International Organisations UNDA (radio and television) and OCIC (cinema and audio-vision), in existence for more than 80 years, will become merged during the

Congress to be held in Rome next November and they will form a new Association called "Signis".

- Having published "Concordancias Franciscanas" (1076 pp) and "Concordancias de Santa Clara de Asís" (386 pages), Br. Leonardo García Alarcón is donating the "Concordancias de los Propósitos de San Leonardo de Puerto Mauricio" (396 pages) to the Franciscan Family. The three works, in Spanish, can be requested at the following address: Iglesia de la Recolección, 3^a Avda. 2-24, zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, C.A.
- The Franciscan Conceptionist Sisters are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the canonisation of their foundress St. Beatriz da Silva, born in Ceuta (Portugal) in 1424 and died in Madrid on the 17th August 1491. The Order of the Immaculate Conception – a Franciscan contemplative Order – was founded in Toledo (Spain) in 1484 and approved by the Holy See in 1489. The Conceptionists live in about 300 monasteries that exist mostly in Spanish and Portuguese speaking territories.

Br. Antonio Montes Moreira new Bishop of Bragança-Miranda

The Holy Father has nominated the ex-Definitory General, Br. Antonio Montes Moreira as Bishop of Bragança-Miranda. The new Bishop was born in São Tomé do Castelo, in the diocese of Vila Real on the 30th April 1935. Following his studies in the Franciscan minor seminary of Montariol (Braga), he attended courses of philosophy in the major seminary of Leiria and the courses of theology in the Franciscan Major Seminary of Lisbon. He later obtained his doctorate in Church history at the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium)

He entered the Order in August 1950, made solemn profession on the 24th of October 1957 and was ordained priest on 13th June 1958. He was professor in the Franciscan Major Seminary and in the Patriarchal Seminary of Olivais (Lisbon) as well

as at the Portuguese Catholic University; Secretary and member of the Directive Council of the Faculty of Theology of the same University; Minister Provincial of the Province of the Holy Martyrs (1984-1991); Vice-President of the Conference of Ministers Provincial of the Iberian Peninsula (1986-1991); Visitor General to the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum (1992) and to the Custody of the Holy Land (1997); Definitory General (1991-1997). Having returned to his Province he was nominated Guardian of the Provincial House and, from 1999, Director of the General Secretariate of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference.

The diocese of Bragança was created in 1770, that of Miranda in 1545. The unification of the two dioceses took place in 1780.

Italy/S. Marco in Lamis Documentation Centre

Inaugurated in the Convent of St. Matthew, in S. Marco in Lamis in Puglia (Italy), *The Documentation and Study Centre "P. Michelangelo Manicone"*, was born of the collaboration between the National Park Organisation of Gargano and the Province of St. Michael the Archangel of the Friars Minor. The history of Gargano is strongly marked by the presence of monasticism, of hermits, of an Order founded by St. John of Matera, which preceded the Mendicants, and later of the Franciscans established in the inhabited centres in order to condition urban structures.

The Centre will collect the scientific, literary and current affairs output, the legislative and administrative acts of the organisations operating in Gargano. The centre is accommodated in the library "P. Antonio Fania" of the Convent of St. Matthew, which has a library heritage of more than seven thousand volumes, among which are precious and rare sections and an interesting *antiquarium* of local archaeological finds.

South Africa/Durban Support for micro-credit

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, OFM, Archbishop of Durban, gave his support to the campaign organised by the Christian churches to ask the banking sector for greater commitment in favour of development and micro-credit. In South Africa only 20% of the 16 million workers have access to credit facilities and bank services and 47% of productive activity is made up of small and medium businesses with less than ten workers. The promoters of the campaign have met with the management of the first four South African banks to explain the problem.

“The Church and other sectors of society – the Cardinal explained – should do something for the problems associated with poverty. Concrete initiatives are needed. Our duty – he added – is to seek a response to poverty that does not stop at charity but includes a just economic system”.

General Visitors

Br. Louis Mascarenhas, Vice-Prov. St. John the Baptist (Pakistan), for the Vice-Prov. of Papua New Guinea.

Br. Iñaki M. Galarraga, Prov. of Arantzazu (Spain), for the Prov. of St. Francis Solanus (Peru).

Br. Edgar Santos, Prov. of St. Paul (Colombia), for the Prov. of Holy Gospel (Mexico).

Br. Juan de Dios Hernández, Prov. Of the Most Holy Trinity (Chile), for the Prov. of St. Michael (Argentina).

Br. Alexis Tran Duc Hai, Prov. St. Francis (Vietnam), for the Prov. of the Holy Martyrs (Korea).

Br. Eliot Bacia, Prov. of the Assumption (USA), for the Prov. of the Immaculate Conception (England).

Br. Tarcisio Colombotti, Prov. St. Charles Borromeo (Italy), for the Prov. St. Virgil (Italy).

Br. Alfred Loughran, Prov. O. L. of Guadalupe (Central-America) for the Prov. of Sta. Barbara (USA).

Br. Joseph Rayes, Prov. St. John the Baptist (USA), for the Prov. of Holy Name (USA).

Mexico/Monterrey Franciscans pro-life

On the second Sunday of May the II Session of the “Chair of Genetics and Human Life” was held in the University of Monterrey (UDEM), Mexico, under the title of “Environmental Factors and the Quality of Life”. The director of this Chair is Br. José Antonio Merino, professor of philosophy at the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum.

Br. José Antonio Abrisqueta, Director of the Department of Genetics of the Higher Council of Scientific Research (Madrid) discussed the scientific aspect of the biological horizon of human ageing and the new perspectives for the prolongation of life and also the external factors that impact on the quality of human life. A.J. Merino dis-

cussed, under the philosophical profile, the topic of the human person as a biological and biographical project, cultural values and quality of life.

This second session had a noteworthy participation and strong interest not only on the part of the many participants but also from TV, radio and newspapers. There was a lot of discussion on how the Franciscans could deal with the present scientific problem with great competence and according to perspectives proper to spirituality. This Chair, inaugurated last year, is presented on the University level as a valid response to the various problems of present-day Genetics.

The International Fraternity of Brussels First evaluation of the experience

The Minister General and Br. Peter Williams visited the International Fraternity “Notre Dame des Nations” in Brussels on the 19th and 20th May 2001. The visit was to support and encourage the stable Fraternity and the Friars who are preparing for the missionary projects of the Order. It was an occasion for a first evaluation just seven months after the setting up of the Fraternity and two months after the start of the formation programme.

The evaluation was centred on fraternal life in its various dimensions, the pastoral experience and the courses

of formation, showing both the positive aspects of the journey up to now and the difficulty in sharing and following the courses on offer from the different specialists, due mainly to language.

Some suggestions and questions also emerged. For example: Now there is the possibility of a specific training for the missionary projects of the Order. But what is there for the missionary projects of the Entities? Are we not speaking of the same Franciscan mission? How can we guarantee an adequate preparation for mission for all?

USA/Pittsburgh 75th Anniversary of the Slovak Friars in the USA

The Franciscan parish of Pittsburgh, USA, celebrated the 75th anniversary of the presence of Slovak Franciscans, who arrived in April 1926 at the request of the Union of Slovak Priests of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. During the Eucharist celebrated by the Bishop, Mons. Donald Wuerl, and concelebrated by the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. John the Baptist, Br. Fred Link, and by the Minister Provincial of the Province of the Holy Saviour in Slovakia, Br. Stefan Bankovic, the first two Friars who arrived in Pittsburgh, Br. Amand Kopac and Br. Ambrose Tomsa,

were remembered. In the letter written on the occasion of the 75th anniversary, the Minister General, Br. Giacomo Bini, encouraged the friars of the two Provinces to reinforce the fraternal links, reminding them that in July 2000 the Vice-Province of the Holy Saviour in the United States was united to the Province of St. John the Baptist.

The history of the activity of the Slovak Friars in the United States is the subject of a book, “The Slovak Franciscans in America” by Br. Richard A Portasik, in two volumes: the first from 1926 to 1966 and the second from 1967 to 1997.

Italy/Franciscan family

What do the people ask of the Franciscans?

The Union of Conferences of Ministers Provincial of the Franciscan Families in Italy held the XXV Assembly to commemorate the 25 years of life of the Union. It chose Puglia in order to come closer to the drama of the immigrants who disembark secretly in their thousands along the coast of Puglia. After the visit to S. Giovanni Rotondo, to Blessed Padre Pio, the Ministers concelebrated in the Basilica of Bari with Mons. Cosmo Francesco Ruppi, President of the Episcopal Conference of Puglia. Mons. Ruppi, in his homily, responded to the question: "What does the Church and our people ask of the Franciscans today?" He said:

"Be that which the Spirit outlined in the heart of Francis! Be Franciscans! Be, that is, not only faithful to the Rule of Life of the Founder, but be for us, for all of us, at the beginning of the third millennium, the living image of him, who, without literature and without power, succeeded in attracting immense masses of faithful and followers. In the heart of the Church you Franciscans are, should be, the fer-

ment of sanctity. That which Francis was for the thirteenth you must be today for the twenty-first century. The world scene has changed radically but the poverty and misery has not changed, it has even become more dark and gloomy: the charm of poverty, in the consumerist trend that afflicts us, is wanted and appreciated even today, possibly more today than before. Be poor and be with the poor! The friaries are still the point of reference for those who have nothing to eat, who have no voice and you, besides being living witnesses to Lady Poverty, must be the point of reference for those who have neither food or faith or hope. If it is true – as Psalm 33 says – that the Lord listens to the cry of the poor, it is also true that it is heard through us, the Church, that "Church of the poor" that is not a sociological formula but rather a way of life, an openness of heart, participation, sharing, solidarity.

We have great need of your presence, of your efforts, of your zeal, but we have, above all, need of you sanctity".

Christian Churches of Europe (ECEN) Franciscan for the Defence of Nature

The III Assembly of ECEN (*European Christian Environmental Network*) was held in Raubichi, near Minsk, the capital of Belarus from the 26th to the 31st May. About 80 participants from different European Christian Churches confronted the topic of Energy and its Environmental Impact from the scientific and theological points of view some 15 years after the disaster of Chernobyl. The Christian Churches are concerned for the integrity of Creation and for the human-nature relationship. It is evident that environment problems are complex and must be faced on the scientific, technical, economic and political levels. It is also, however, a problem of culture and mentality that the Christian Churches must face up to in the light of the Old and New Testaments.

Insistently invited by the organizing Committee, the European Franciscans participated for the first time, represented by Br. José Antonio Merino, professor of Philosophy at the Antonianum in Rome and permanent

representative of the Catholic Church to the ECEN. The figure of St. Francis is a model for all and the European Franciscans should seriously face up to the defence of nature as a gift from God. The Christian Churches expect a serious and profound commitment from Franciscans to this problem.

Those delegated by the European Episcopal Conferences for the care of the environment had another meeting on the topic *Styles of Life and Maintainable Development* in Badin (Slovakia) from the 17th to the 20th May last.

Br. Merino was also present as representative of the European Franciscans. There was a lot of discussion on the responsibility of the Church. A final document on the obligation of Christians in the problem of the environment was published. In this meeting also the Franciscans were challenged to have the courage to offer a response in accordance with the example of Francis and Franciscan spirituality.

El Salvador

The Friars for reconstruction

The earthquakes that afflicted the Central-American Republic of El Salvador on the 13th of January and 13th of February 2001 left many fatal victims and millions of displaced, especially among the poorest. The Franciscan Family from all over the world expressed its solidarity in a concrete way. The Province of St. Mary of Guadalupe created a special Commission, made up of a representative of each Franciscan community effected by the earthquake under the coordination of the Vicar-Provincial, Br. Domingo Solis, who, since February, has been transferred to El Salvador. The Commission chose a model of a pre-fabricated house that is easily transported and quickly erected at a cost of US\$2,500 each. The damaged houses that can be salvaged will be repaired. Another big problem is that of the families that also lost the piece of land on which their house was constructed. The Commission is still looking for funds to buy suitable lands. The Provincial Definitory decided to donate part of a farm, which is the property of the Province and enough for 20 houses, to the people.

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