



The Service of Authority and the Obligation of Obedience

The Minister General addresses the Meeting of the General Visitators nominated in 2000 - November 2000

The goal and destiny which we look forward to, and against which we must measure ourselves, leaders and subjects alike, is the love of the Father and the following of Christ to the end, offering oneself to God for the good of the Brothers. According to Francis, the Holy Spirit is the Minister General of the fraternity: all are bound to obey him, an obedience which expresses itself in being faithful to the Gospel plan as set out in the Rule and General Constitutions, and in the documents of the Church and Order. The plan for Gospel living must direct the steps of both those in authority and the individual. Thus, an important and indispensable role in this process is entrusted to **authority**, a role which must be re-thought and re-evangelised, in view of a service - a God-given gift - a clearly spiritual mission. (GGCC 45-46) To allow oneself, like the prophets, to be

“possessed” by this mission is a guarantee for the community. But when, depending exclusively on one’s own capabilities, one lets oneself be taken up solely in seeking success, then the dynamics for building gospel fraternities are in danger of failure.

An authority which allows itself to be guided by the Spirit, listening and collaborating with others (Definitors, Guardians, Formation Directors) can open new horizons: it becomes a guide and incentive to achieving a goal; it facilitates and challenges evangelical options in the fraternity; it engages in nurturing ideas and motivations among the Brothers, more than just doing ‘things’ or maintaining lifeless structures; it knows how to create confidence and a sense of belonging, indispensable conditions for innovation and creativity in fraternity.

Authoritarianism, like permis-

siveness, paralyses and frustrates in others the thrust to be new and creative.

Dialogue and spiritual growth within a Province, like openness to relationship with other entities, and with the ‘government’ of the Order, depends - too often - on the manner in which authority is understood and exercised. Franciscan evangelical life cannot exhaust itself within the boundaries of a Province.

It is urgent to prepare and form for the future a more evangelical and franciscan leadership which will be a loving, fraternal service.

Engagements of the Minister General

4th - 7th March

Rome:

Fraternal visit to the Province of Sts Peter & Paul

8th - 9th March

Meeting with the Definitors of the Provinces of Central Italy

11th March

Beatification of the Spanish Martyrs, fr Pasquale Fortuño Almela, fr Plácido Carcía Gilabert, fr Alfredo Pellicer Muñoz, fr Salvador Mollar Ventura

12th-23rd March

Rome: General Curia - Tempo Forte of General Definitory

28th-31st March

Lusaka: Visit to the Inter-Franciscan Theological College “St. Bonaventure”

Spain/Santiago de Compostela Meeting of the Formation Council

From 27th November to the 8th December, the Province and fraternity of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, hosted the meeting of the International Council for Formation and Studies in the Order. The Council meets every two years. Besides fr José R. Carballo, Definitor General and General Secretary for Formation and Studies, and fr Ernest Siekierka, Assistant General Secretary, 14 Delegates of the Conferences of the Order took part. The Council heard reports, presented by the Delegates, on the situation of studies in the Order, and analysed deeply the themes allocated to it by the Minister General and Definitory:

Ratio Studiorum, the exodus from the Order of solemnly professed, the pastoral care of vocations today, and the personal accompanying of young friars in initial and ongoing formation. During the assembly, fr Henry Willenborg (Sacred Heart Province, USA), fr Dobrimir Jaształ (Custody of the Holy Land) and fr Carlos Alberto Breis Pereira (Province of St Anthony, Brazil) were elected members of the International Committee (representing the delegates of all the Conferences) which will help the General Secretary during the next two years.

Small/Big News Items

- The General Definitory has entrusted to the General Secretariate for Formation and Studies the task of drawing up directives for the pastoral care of vocations (CPV) within the Order. Help will be provided by an ad hoc commission, whose members are: fr José R. Carballo, Definitor General and General Secretary for Formation and Studies, fr Ernest Siekierka, Assistant General Secretary; fr Massimo Fusarelli, Province of Sts Peter & Paul (Italy); and fr Sergiusz Baldyga, Province of the Assumption (Poland).
- Fr Giorgio Auletta, fr Klaus Coviello, fr Paul Iorio and fr Marco Vaccari lived an itinerant experience for forty days, without fixed abode and without money, on the outskirts of Rome and in Rome itself. They wished to make a true pilgrimage of prayer and to share the life of the poor. They also had the experience of sharing prayer and food with other poor pilgrims, so as to live deeply the grace of the Jubilee.
- Fr Agostino Gardin, Minister General of the Conventuals, has been elected President of the Union of General Superiors (USG). Fr Gardin, Minister General since June 1995, is 56 years of age.
- The Congregation for Catholic Education has signed the Decree of Affiliation of St Anthony's Seminary in Tokyo, of the Province of Japan, to the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum.
- The Publishing House, Dietrich Coelde, of the Province of the Holy Cross (Germany) will in the future undertake a close co-operation with the Publishing House 'Butzon and Bercker' and will thus forgo its own independence. In future its books will be published by Butzon and Bercker, in the series 'Coelde Editions'.
- In the grading of all private schools in Jordan, which number 285 schools, the Franciscan College 'Terra Sancta' of Amman gained first place last year in the Classics section, and third place in the Science section. In the present Government of Jordan, four Ministers are former pupils of the College: the Prime Minister Ali abu Ragheb, the Minister for Education Kaled Toukan, the Minister for Culture Taleb al Riffai, and the Minister for

Transport, Fares al Nablisi.

- Of the 7123 pupils who attend the 17 schools maintained by the Custody of the Holy Land, only 4063 are Christian.
- The Studium Biblicum Franciscanum of Tokyo has published the *Book of Isaiah* - translation, introduction and notes (more than 500 pages). With the next publication of the *Prophet Jeremiah*, the Studium will have completed the translation/commentary into Japanese of the entire Bible.
- Fr José Beltrán, of the Province of Arantzazu, Spain, has celebrated 40 years of service in the General Curia at the General Procuration. The Minister General and all his confreres thanked him for this generous service to the Order.
- There was a family celebration at the General Curia on the 17th of December for fr Boniface Bulfon who crossed the age threshold of 90 years. Fr Boniface, member of the Venetian Province, has served the Order in the Curia since 1939, first as private secretary to the Minister General, and then as collaborator at the General Postulation. The Minister General, in the course of a Liturgy of Thanksgiving, in which all his confreres in the Curia took part, wished him an unending springtime nourished by the eternal youthfulness of the Spirit.

Death of Fr. Constantine Koser, ex-Minister General

Fr. Constantine Koser, ex-Minister General, died on December 19, 2000 in Petropolis, Brazil. He guided the Order from 1965 to 1979.

Koser was born on May 9, 1918 in Curitiba, Brazil. He entered the Order in 1935, made solemn profession in 1939 and was ordained a priest in 1941. Before being elected Definitor General for Latin America (1963) he always taught theology at the Franciscan Theological Institute of his Province of the Immaculate Conception in Petropolis.

On November 3, 1965, when Sepenski was named a Bishop, the General Definitorium elected him Vicar General of the Order. The General

Courses in Primary Evangelisation

Italy is also a land of mission, as is every country with an ancient Christian tradition. Ordinary pastoral care, therefore, is no longer sufficient. It is necessary, indeed urgent, to begin again with guidelines that are proper to mission and primary evangelisation. CISM (Italian Conference of Major Superiors) is convinced that the rediscovery of primary evangelisation is the way to follow for the renewal of the Church, and thus, in the Church, the prophetic nature of consecrated life.

In order to promote a true culture of primary evangelisation, fr Ciro Stanzione, Secretary of the OFM Provincials' Conference of Italy (COMPI), and with responsibility for the area of evangelisation in CISM, has worked out a programme which proposes to face the following topics in a general and systematic manner: evangelisation, first evangelisation, first proclamation, contents of first proclamation, the programme to follow first proclamation (catechumenate, gospel preparation, christian initiation in its totality). The first course took place in Rome from the 2nd to the 5th July, the second from the 8th to 11th October, and the third from the 20th to 23rd December 2000. During the courses 'groups' were formed among the male and female Religious who took part. After an initial input each group prepared its own formation course.

Chapter in 1967 elected him Minister General and re-elected him in 1976.

"His insightful theological sensitivity and his deep conviction of the need for a certain and updated formation of the Friars opened the Order to the great needs of the Church and the world." wrote Fr. Giacomo Bini, the Minister General, in a message to the Order.

He also thanked the Province "for having given to the Order, at the right time, this extraordinary man of God who did so much for the edification of the Church and the renewal of Franciscanism. In this service he applied all the generosity of his heart and the acuteness of his intelligence."

Permanent Commission for the PAA

The General Definitorium, in its session of November 8, 2000, appointed the following permanent commission for the Antonianum: Fr. José R. Carballo (President), Definitor General and Secretary General for Formation and Studies; Fr. Marco Nobile, Rector of the PAA; Fr. Javier Uribe, Province of the Holy Faith, Colombia; Fr. Romano Almagno, Province of the Immaculate Conception, USA; Fr. Jean-Marie Sevrin, Province of the Three Companions, France/Belgium; Fr. Alvaro Cacciotti, Professor in the PAA; Fr. Nikolaus Schöch, Dean of the Canon Law Faculty, PAA; and Fr. José Elias Rauda, Student in the PAA. The tasks of the commission will include organizational betterment in the PAA (teaching, research and life) and improvements in administration (economy, students, professors), beginning with proposals coming from the previous commission.

New Provincial

Fr. Luciano Brod
Province of the Holy Cross, Brazil.

Our Friars in East Timor

Since September 1999, when a referendum favoured independence for the island and was followed by grave disorder among the people, East Timor is no longer dependent upon Indonesia, but is governed by a United Nations Provisional Administration (UNTAET). The majority of the people of East Timor are Catholic, with a very strong Church. There are two dioceses in the country, Baucau and Dili. The Bishop of Dili is the Salesian Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

The Franciscan Province of Indonesia first sent friars to East Timor in 1988, to establish a mission there. The Provincial at the time was Michael Ankur, now Bishop of Bogor. The first three friars chose Wekiar as their base, in an isolated region near the coast, 180 km. south of the capital, Dili. They began pastoral ministry in the parish of Alas, 40 km. from Wekiar, in an

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) A Resource Book for the Animators of Justice and Peace

Concerned as to how best provide a genuine service of animation, the International Council for JPIC in the Order, composed of the fifteen JPIC co-ordinators of the Conferences, decided during its meeting in Seoul in August, 1995, to propose to the General Definitorium the composition of a resource book on JPIC which might serve as a useful instrument for the promotion of these values within the Order. The General Definitorium approved the proposal and entrusted the coordination of this project to the Office for JPIC in the General Curia. Translations are now available in Italian, English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese. A translation in Croatian will be ready shortly. As is evident, the Conferences undertook to take care of the translations themselves. Accordingly, anyone who wants a copy should apply to the JPIC Office of his Conference. The texts are as follows:

- *Strumenti di Pace* - Sussidio per i Frati Minori operatori di giustizia, pace e salvaguardia del creato, Conferenza Ministri Provinciali dei

Frati Minori d'Italia, pp. 334.

- *Instruments of Peace* - a resource manual in the ministry of Justice, Peace and integrity of Creation, English Speaking Conference, Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, pp. 260.

- *Instruments of Peace* - a Franciscan Resource Book, The Franciscan Press, Box Hill, Australia, pp. 222.

- *Instruments de Paix* - Documents franciscains sur la Justice, la Paix e la Sauvegarde de la Création, Les Editions Franciscaines, Paris, pp. 174.

- *Werkzeuge des Friedens und der Gerechtigkeit* - ein Handbuch für Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung, "Gerechtigkeit und Frieden" der Mitteleuropäischen Franziskanerprovinzen, pp. 256.

- *Franciscanos por la Justicia, la Paz, la Ecología*, Editorial Franciscana Arantzazu, Oñati, pp. 370.

- *Instrumentos da Paz* - Subsídio franciscano sobre Justiça, Paz e Integridade da Criação, Conferência OFM do Brasil, pp. 400.

area even more isolated. They later accepted a second parish in Wekiar. In order to reach these places from Dili, it was necessary to drive for at least seven hours, on narrow roads, improvised cuttings and mountain paths.

Four other friars later joined the mission. At present there are six Indonesian professed friars there (four priests and two lay brothers). Apart from the pastoral care of the two parishes, they teach in high schools, they are involved in various social projects for the poor, and they are involved in the reconstruction of schools and houses burned by the Indonesian soldiers as they departed the island. They also carry on a silent ministry of peace-making and reconciliation among former paramilitaries. During the most dangerous time, in September 1999, the friars stayed with the people, sharing their sufferings.

In the last twelve years, three young men from East Timor made

solemn vows, and two of these were ordained priests. At the present time, there are five candidates in the postulancy programme. Because of the disturbed political situation it has become very difficult to send candidates to Indonesia for initial formation. To enter the postulancy programme, East Timorese candidates must have an entry visa valid for at least six months, and this is very difficult to obtain. For this reason the Indonesian Province is thinking of opening a house of formation in East Timor.

A further consequence of the political situation is the problem that the Indonesian friars are seen as "foreign missionaries." Accordingly, it seems the Franciscan presence in East Timor will develop as a "mission" of the Indonesian Province, before it can become an independent and autonomous entity of the Order.

Italy/Venice

A Fraternal Visit

The Minister General visited the Venetian Province of St. Anthony of Padua during October 10-14, 2000, accompanied by Fr. Antonio Riccio, Definitor General, and Fr. Antonio Franjic, Secretary General.

The visit began at Gemona, at one of the most ancient shrines of St. Anthony, the first church dedicated in his honour, consecrated in 1248. The Minister General met the Guardians there. He told them of his conviction that the service they are called to render is a *gift*, to be lived in faith, exercising the role of mediation, of accompaniment and of animation within the fraternity. Fr. Giacomo insisted that, together with the Provincial Minister and Definitorium, the Guardians are the custodians of the "*forma vitae*" (the way of life), the gospel project entrusted to us as a legacy by St. Francis.

On October 11, the Minister met the Definitory, and invited them to risk energy and good will in a project of gospel life, and not to limit themselves to a sterile administration of survival. The Formators then explained to the Minister the actual situation, the hopes and the problems of the various houses of formation. Fr. Giacomo emphasised that "to form" is first of all to undertake a journey of self-formation, a path of trust and of dialogue, which is significantly illustrated in the walk that Jesus made with the disciples of Emmaus.

In the friary of St. Francis "della Vigna", in Venice, the seat of the Provincial Curia, the Minister met the President, the teachers and students of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies, which is situated within the friary complex, and where the Minister General is the Chancellor.

In the friary of San Fidenzio, near Verona, Fr. Giacomo was received by the Poor Clares, who were joined by other Sisters from the monasteries around Venice and from Ferrara. In the convent of St. Bernardine, in Verona, Fr. Giacomo met the young friar students of the Venetian area, of Lombardy, of Piemonte and of Egypt and the Ukraine. Also present were the novices, coming from the inter-provincial novitiate in Baccanello.

The day for the provincial fraternity, on October 13, was a central and meaningful point in the whole visit. A considerable number of friars – about 170 in all – came together in the friary of Our Lady of the Miracles in Motta di Livenza, near Treviso. At the presentation of gifts during the Eucharist, some friars carried to the altar an image of African design, representing the Jubilee gift of the friars of the Venetian Province: the gift of a new novitiate to the missionary foundation of Guinea Bissau. To meet the expenses involved every fraternity has committed itself to contribute a certain sum of money, the fruit of self-sacrifice, of frugality, and of initiatives in solidarity. The Minister concluded his round of engagements by meeting with the Secular Franciscans and the Youth Association (GIFRA) in Chiampo, in the square of the Lourdes Grotto, built by Blessed Claudio Granzotto, a friar artist, whose first centenary of birth was celebrated this year.

Italy/Lecce

From assistance to collaboration

During October 16 – 18, 2000, Fr. Giacomo Bini, Minister General, accompanied by Fr. Antonio Riccio, Definitor General, visited the Province of the Assumption in Lecce, Italy. Recording this fraternal visit, Fr. Agostino Buccoliero wrote: "As a provincial fraternity we were in full accord with the objectives of the Minister General's visit. The first objective was linked with the ministry of Fr. Giacomo and with our own search for authenticity. The vision, the words, the orientations of the Minister are those of 17,000 friars spread throughout the world. Through his mediation, we, a small fraternity of 108 friars, were able to share the thinking of the universal fraternity, in order to live our local reality with wider perspectives. Consequently, we prepared for and awaited the visit of the Minister General as a special opportunity for enhancing the quality of our life and mission.

A second objective associated with the visit of the Minister was to motivate the Franciscan family again in the direction of greater unity. In Salento, franciscanism is well planted. Besides the Friars Minor

(108 friars in 15 fraternities), there is also the Second Order (5 monasteries with about 100 Poor Clare Sisters), the Secular Franciscan Order (47 fraternities with more than 3,600 members), the Youth Movement, GIFRA (10 fraternities with about 250 young members), and the Secular Institute of the Little Franciscan Family (three groups with about sixty members). Our Franciscan presence is significant, but it risks the danger of fragmentation because of how little we work together in giving witness and in evangelization. We asked the Minister to help us learn how to work together within our charism. None of the three Orders can consider itself self-sufficient or autonomous. We all have need of the witness of fraternal life of the friars, the contemplative dimension lived by the Poor Clares, and the secular presence of Franciscan laypeople. We friars, in particular, in our relationships with the second and third Orders, want to move from a role of assistance to a position of sharing in common projects, so as to "restore" what we have received from the Lord."

Fraternitas *notiziario internazionale OFM*

direttore responsabile: Gino Concetti

direttore editoriale: Clarêncio Neotti

grafica: Ufficio Comunicazione OFM

DIREZIONE, REDAZIONE E AMMINISTRAZIONE

via S. Maria Mediatrice, 25

00165 Roma

tel. +39.0668.491.360

fax. +39.0668.491.364

e-mail comgen@ofm.org

<http://www.ofm.org/3/frat/FRAmain.html>

Autoriz. n. 524/95 del 21.11.95 Trib. di Roma