



## The Fraternity as a school of dialogue

*From the address to the Chapter of the Custody of the Holy Land, Amman (Jordan), 18<sup>th</sup> July 2004*

From the beginning, and uninterruptedly down through the centuries, the Franciscan presence in these countries, especially in the Holy Land, has always carried out an essential role and was accepted because of the firm will of the Friars to announce that God, incarnated in the womb of the Virgin Mary, meets everyone, knocks down every wall of separation and overcomes every human enmity by giving peace to all (cf. *Eph* 2,14). This is the announcement that you continue to make in the name of the Church and of the whole Order. It is an announcement which, in a society that continually seeks pretexts for conflict and hatred, is more prophetic than ever and becomes dialogue in the concrete life of every day.

Today we speak too much, perhaps, about dialogue and, as always happens in these cases, the concept runs the risk of losing its consistency, its contact with reality, by remaining simply an ideal, as much suggestive as innocuous. Re-reading the pages of the Final Document of the General Chapter in which this topic is spoken of (cf. *May the Lord give you peace* 28-32) and reflecting on

our everyday life, I think that for us, Friars Minor, dialogue continues to be an authentic and dramatic challenge. It is, in fact, our very life, which calls us to the requirement of a continuous dialogue with our brother.

Our custodial reality, then, made up of international Fraternities, is certainly a very good school in which to learn to dialogue with the other: with a brother who is such through a common vocation, but who by culture and tradition is so different. Knowing how to accept, learning to accept, these differences with patience and love makes your Fraternity the primary place in which you are called to live as men in dialogue, a dialogue which began with the "washing of feet", as our father Francis wished (cf. *Rnb* 6,3), and which is carried out in a disposition to give the concrete services which obedience requires each day. I would like to express, in this regard, a special thanks to those Friars who, despite the weight of years, give witness to authentic Franciscan life and continue to do all that is requested of them by the Custos or Guardian with love.

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General OFM

## FRANCE – *Minister General to Chapter of the Provinces of France and Belgium*

Nevers (France) - The Provinces of "Bl. Pacificus" (France) and of the "Three Companions" (France-Belgium) celebrated a Chapter of Mats from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004. More than 130 Friars, among them some French-speaking Canadians and Africans, were present at the Chapter, which was held at the house of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers, where the body of St. Bernadette of Lourdes is preserved.

Accompanied by the General Definitor Br. Jakab Várnai and by Br. Philippe Schillings, the Minister General arrived in the afternoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July for the opening of the Chapter. It began in the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July with the address of Br. José R. Carballo, who, recalling the call of the General Chapter to gospel radicalism, spent time on the need for the "re-foundation" of the Order and also in giving a "visible" content to the VIII Centenary of the foundation of the Order. The address of the Minister was followed by a period of dialogue, in which people spoke

about the way of living such an orientation in the reality of the Church and of the Order in France and Belgium. The morning ended with the Eucharistic celebrated presided over by Mgr. Deniau, Bishop of Nevers. In the afternoon the discourse of the Minister General was studied in depth in small groups in order to try to give concrete expression to the concept of re-foundation. Later, the Fraternity of the SFO in Dijon presented a project of formation and activity on some aspects of justice, peace and integrity of creation. Before leaving for Rome, for the "tempo forte" of the General Definitory, Br. José celebrated the Eucharist in the church which houses the tomb of St. Bernadette in the presence of the Chapter Members and faithful at 10 o'clock on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July. After the departure of the Minister and General Definitor, the Chapter of Mats continued according to schedule: a visit to Nevers, inter-religious meeting, missions of the Friars in the places of fracture and itinerancy.

## USA - *60 years of presence in Central America*

The Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York in the USA has been present in Honduras at the service of the local Church since 1944. The missionaries who gave service there during the 60 years were many and 5 from among them were appointed Bishops in the dioceses of

Comayaga and Olancho: Br. Bernardino Mazzarella, who passed away in 1979, Br. Gerald Scarpone, Br. Nicholas D'Antonio, Br. Maurus Muldoon and Br. Robert Camilleri. The Province of the Immaculate always maintained good relations with the Pastors of this Church

of Central America, receiving help, advice and encouragement. Proof of this relationship is the friendship with the Cardinal, Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, SDB, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, friend of the Friars and frequent guest at the Provincial Curia of New York; he avails of the collaboration of Br. Robert Camilleri, OFM, appointed Auxiliary in his diocese. Cardinal Maradiaga always showed a particular care for the Friars, who invited him to the Chapter of Mats. For that reason, the Minister Provincial, Br. Robert Campagna, asked and

obtained from the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor the affiliation to the Order of this great friend of the Friars Minor. On the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2004, during the Provincial Chapter, Br. Robert gave the Franciscan habit to Card Maradiaga, affiliating him to the Order of Friars Minor. On receiving the habit of St. Francis, the Prelate said: "This is a holy privilege and a great honour" and he wanted to wear the habit during the whole day spent with the Friar Chapter Members.

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### ITALY – *Intense time of Ongoing Formation*

From the 21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April this year, 50 Friars of the Trent Province of St. Vigil lived an intense period of ongoing formation in the Franciscan places of Assisi, the Rieti Valley and Casentino, in order to combine the return to the sources of the charism with the desire for up-dating. The days were structured in such a way that they were able to live prayer, reflection and fraternal communion in an intense manner. The formative contents moved along two lines:

1. The acceptance of the Final Document of the 2003 General Chapter, "May the Lord give you peace", through a simple but efficacious methodology which provided: an introduction to the topic by Br. Francesco Bravi, Definitor General, personal study of the text, sharing in small groups and the synthesis of the groups' reflections in a plenary assembly.

2. The visit to the Franciscan places, supported by an historical-thematic sheet, an excerpt from the Franciscan Sources and some questions for a prayerful reflection and an up-dating on the message of the place.

This sheet is available on the internet at the address of [http://www.ofmtn.pcn.net/testi/formazione/Cartella\\_testi.htm](http://www.ofmtn.pcn.net/testi/formazione/Cartella_testi.htm)

The places visited were: the hermitage of Monte Casale; San. Damiano, St. Clare's, Carceri, St. Mary of the Angels and St. Francis in Assisi; Fontecolombo and Greccio in the Rieti Valley; and finally, La Verna. The experience was particularly welcomed by the Friars who participated because it allowed them to live the ongoing formation in a fraternal atmosphere, powerfully spiritual, and in contact with the grace of the places of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

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### BELGIUM – *International Fraternity of "Notre Dame des Nations"*

The fraternity "Notre Dame des Nations" of Brussels has received two new Friars: Br. Floriano Weiss, who is the guardian, and Br. Pero Vrebac, charged with coordinating the formation of the missionaries.

The fraternity is also open to inter-Franciscan collaboration. From the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June a meeting was held in Brussels in which, together with the fraternity, the Secretaries General for Missions of the Friars Minor (Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli), of the Conventuals (Br. Tadeusz Swiatkowski) and of the Capuchins (Br. Helmut Rakowski) participated. The theme was the requirements of the Franciscan missions today, the contents and the process of formation for new Franciscan missionaries and collaboration between the Franciscan Families in the preparation and support of missionaries. With regard to

the formative process, a process to be carried out in three stages was identified:

1. Franciscan missionary preparation in Brussels as a phase of transition and initiation to mission;
2. Accompaniment and support during the first period of mission;
3. Evaluation and deep study of the Franciscan mission after about one year of missionary life.

The fraternity of Brussels is preparing itself to receive and form the fourth group of missionaries at the end of September next. It has prepared a new programme in which missionary experiences are developed as a basis of formation for the Franciscan missionary. It is hoped to have the collaboration of other Franciscan Families for the next formation period.

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### FORMATION AND STUDIES – *Visit to Cono Sur and English-speaking Conferences*

In June and July, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, participated in the Assembly of Ministers and Formators of the Cono Sur Conference in Argentina, he met the Friars of the Houses of Formation of the Province of "St. Francis of Quito" in Ecuador and took part in the meeting of Formators of the English-speaking Conference in Colorado Springs in the USA. The diversity of our Entities and Conferences in the world of formation was shown to be a richness. Each area already has a consolidated process and a good insertion

into the concrete realities of the different social and ecclesiastical contexts. A careful attention to the present changes was also noted, especially in regard to origin and type of candidates and to the formative methodology which needs constant up-dating. A common fact is the challenge of the human maturity of the candidates and Friars in ongoing formation, which is found particularly today in all latitudes. This challenge requires courage and intelligence in interpreting it and audacity and gospel compassion in facing up to it. The reality of studies and

Study Centres, in which the Friars work (the Franciscan Faculty of Quito and St. Bonaventure's University in the U.S.A.) also show that there is a new awareness of the

importance of and seriousness required for the promotion of studies and dialogue with culture within the Order.

### ITALY – *Celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SFO Rule of Paul VI*

There were more than 2,000 representatives of the Italian SFO and You.Fra in Rome on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2004, for the closing celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Rule of Paul VI. They were two days lived with intense joy and communion. The Councillor of the CIOFS Presidency, Benedetto Lino, and the General Assistants Br. Samy Irudaya, OFM Cap and Br. Ivan Matic, OFM, were present. The gathering place for the first day of the meeting was the Basilica of St. John Lateran. After the fraternal welcome and the recitation of the rosary, the Eucharist, presided over Card. Camillo

Ruini, was celebrated. All the Secular Franciscans present renewed their profession of the Rule on this occasion. That evening all transferred to the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul where the festival of the Fraternity was held. The following day, Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June, the Secular Franciscans, with their Assistants, had an appointment in St. Peter's Square to take part in the recitation of the Angelus of the Holy Father. At the end of the prayer, Pope John Paul II addressed a special greeting to all the Secular Franciscans present on the occasion of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Rule given by Pope Paul VI.

### CROATIA – *Help for "Pro-Life"*

An association, which promotes and helps life saved through the prevention of abortion and supports the young mothers, founded by the Friars Minor, has been operating in Zara, Croatia, for more than 12 years. Established in 1992 at the initiative of the Friars of the Province of St. Jerome in Zara, the association "Pro Vita" made use of the collaboration of a big group of doctors, social workers and volunteers. The women who ask for help from "Pro Vita" can meet experts in the Franciscan parish. The meetings are of different kinds and go from simple listening to specific consultation. In the majority of cases the reasons that induce them to reject pregnancy are the

poverty and grave indigence in which many families are forced to live. A network of solidarity to support families in difficulty has sprung up. The Franciscans of Zara launched an appeal to which many volunteers have already responded. During these 12 years, the solidarity has spread rapidly from Zara across Croatia to Italy and other countries. In addition to financial support, the volunteers make provision for the making of clothes for the newly born and mothers, and for the finding of food for the babies. Thanks to the work of "Pro Vita", more than 900 babies more are alive.

### INDONESIA – *Environmental pastoral project*

A situation of conflict has been developing on the island of Flores in Indonesia since the end of 2003. The Indonesian government had planned the de-forestation of an area where the local peasants cultivate coffee. The farming economy of the villages is prevalently ruled by the cultivation of coffee and putting the government plan into operation would have forced the population to emigrate. The situation deteriorated until it became a conflict. During manifestation in March 2004 there were clashes between the population and the police resulting in the wounding of 20 people and the death of four peasants. The Indonesian Friars supported the population of Flores from the beginning. The Office of Justice and Peace of the Franciscan Friars in Jakarta followed the situation

through its sector of legal assistance. To help the pacific resolution of the situation, which was deteriorating, and the people of the villages, an "Environmental Pastoral Project" was presented. This project provided for the formation of farmers in the knowledge and use of new techniques in the cultivation of coffee, which would create the basis for better family economy and the subsistence of the population. This project is among the works chosen by the Friars Minor of the Indonesian Province on the occasion of the 75 years of Franciscan presence. The Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia decided to utilise the time of the jubilee to incorporate the praxis of Justice and Peace into the life of the Province.

### *Franciscan Bookmark*

- MARIA DELLA TRINITÀ, **Interior Colloquium**, (under the care of G.C. Bottini and L. Cignelli) Franciscan Printing Press, IX ed. (Jerusalem 2004). Whoever visits the humble cemetery of the Poor Clare Monastery, located on the road joining Jerusalem to Bethlehem, will find it hard to find the tomb of St. Maria, hidden among the others. Even though her name and writings have been spread throughout the world and published in different languages, what is most surprising,

if one reflects on it, is that this came about without any promotional or institutional apparatus of a publicity nature (text in Italian).

- LAURIOLA Giovanni, **From Christology to Christ-centeredness**, Editor AGA (Alberobello 2004). The text, born of a lived experience in the Holy Land as a course of ongoing formation on the personality of Christ, acquires the air of a strong provocation for every Christian, but especially for a Franciscan who has made his life in Christ

and his existential programme on the example of Francis and the Franciscan school. The volume stimulates a return to the total and global Christ, based on the primacy of the incarnation in accordance with the teaching of Duns Scotus. (text in Italian)

• FRANCISCO DE OSUNA, **A Spiritual Primer**, (under the direction of José Juan Morcillo Pérez) Editorial Cisneros (Madrid 2004). Francisco de Osuna is one of the

greatest exponents of Spanish mysticism. He systemised the most deep-seated spiritual life, that of Meditation, making the most of interiority and experiences in the field of prayer. The first part of the “Spiritual Primer”, written in 1528, is a marvellous example of meditation on the Passion of the Son of God. The edition was sponsored by the Conference of Ministers Provincial OFM. (text in Spanish)

### ***Little/Big News***

• Br. Antonio Franjic, the Vicar General of the Order, is in Verona recovering from an operation. It is expected that he will return to the Fraternity of the General Curia in September. The Minister General and the Definitory thank all for their closeness at this time and ask them to continue to pray for our brother.

• The “Studium Biblicum Franciscanum” of Hong Kong has produced a CD, “Omnes gentes plaudite manibus”. It is a musical tribute to Br. Gabriele Allegra, who translated the Bible into Chinese, and to the Chinese musician and composer, Chiang Wen Yeh. Born in Taiwan in 1910, Chiang was imprisoned in 1946, after the Japanese occupation. He met Br. Allegra and with his help was able to re-introduce himself into life after imprisonment. Aware of the musical talent of Chiang, Br. Allegra proposed to him to put the Bible to music in accordance with Chinese traditional culture. Though not a Catholic, Chiang began with the Psalms, which we now find on the CD. In 1983, just before his death, Chiang gave his production of sacred music to the Studium Biblicum. The CD can be requested from the “Centro Studi P. Gabriele

Allegra”, Convento La Gancia, 90133 Palermo (Italy) tel. +39.091.6167013.

• The President of the USA Episcopal Conference sent a message to the Friars of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York gathered for the Provincial Chapter. In the text “Francis, rebuild my Church: the role of the Franciscans in re-winning trust”, Mgr. Wilton faced up to the problem of the world crisis caused by the sexual abuse scandal. He showed how the role of the Friars, the Fraternity, the Province and Order could be fundamental in re-winning trust and in setting the limits to the wounds caused to the whole Church by this grave trauma.

• A Course on Franciscanism organised by formators of various religious Orders will take place in the Theological Institute of Assisi from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004. The lectures will be entrusted to prof. Grado Merlo on the topic of: *The History of Franciscanism (cent. XIII-XVI)*. Participation is free. For further information contact: Segreteria Istituto Teologico di Assisi, P.zza S. Francesco, 2, 06082 Assisi (PG) Italy. Tel. 075.813061; email: [teologiassisi@virgilio.it](mailto:teologiassisi@virgilio.it).

### ***Agenda of the Minister General***

- from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> August, Feast of the Porziuncola, St. Mary of the Angels (Italy)
- from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> August, Closure of the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of St. Clare, Assisi (Italy)
- from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August, UCLAF (Union of Franciscan Conferences of Latin America), Fortaleza (Brazil)
- from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August, Visit to the Province of St. Anthony, Recife (Brazil)
- 31<sup>st</sup> August, Meeting with all the Formators of Brazil, Belo Horizonte (Brazil)
- from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September, International Congress on the Franciscan Conceptionists, Toledo (Spain)
- from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September, Chapter of the Foundation of St. Francis in Russia-Kazakhstan, Warsaw (Poland)
- from 13<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September, Tempo Forte of the General Definitory, Rome (Italy)
- 17<sup>th</sup> September, Feast of the Stigmata in La Verna (Italy)
- from 29<sup>th</sup> Sept. to 2<sup>nd</sup> October, Visit to Prov. St. Wenceslas of Bohemia and Moravia in Prague (Czech Republic)

### ***New Visitors General***

- Br. José Pereira Neves (Prov. of Portugal) for the General Curia “S. Maria Mediatrix” in Rome (Italy).
- Br. Artemio Vítores (Custody of the Holy Land) for the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum, Rome (Italy).
- Br. Dymitr Zeglin (Prov. Imm. Conc., Cracow, Poland) for the Prov. of the Assumption BVM, Katowice (Poland).
- Br. Eulalio Gomez (Sts. Peter and Paul, Michoacan, Mexico) for Prov. of Sts. Francis and James, Jalisco (Mexico).
- Br. Blazej Kurokski (Prov. St. Hedwig, Wroklaw, Poland) for Prov. St. Mary of the Angels, Cracow (Poland).
- Br. Lorenzo Malatesta (Prov. S. Heart of Jesus, Naples, Italy) for Prov. of Holy Name of Jesus, Palermo (Italy).
- Br. Böite Mihály (Prov. St. Stephan, King, Transylvania) for the Prov. of St. Mary in Hungary.
- Br. Astijus Kungys (Vice Prov. St. Casimir, Lithuania) for the Foundation of St. Francis (Russia and Kazakhstan).

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