



The commitment of the Friars Minor to Justice and Peace

From the Minister's intervention to the European Congress of OFM Delegates for Justice and Peace

[...] To understand better what our commitment in favour of peace could mean, I think it is necessary to deal briefly with non-peace, that is, with violence, a real scourge of our times. Violence does not only consist of the use of arms in war, in terrorism and mistreatment, cases in which "direct violence" is spoken about, because "structural violence" also exists. This is not exercised directly, but through structures. It is begun by the fact that some have everything, and more than everything, and others have nothing and die because of their extreme misery. There is, finally, a "cultural violence", based on ideas, emotive and symbolic reasons, which legitimise what we have called "direct" and "structural" violence. "Cultural violence", therefore, is the real "breeding ground" of direct and structural violence, and "cultural violence" justifies both the "direct" and "structural violence". As a result there is a network of violence which becomes a mortal trap for those who fall into it. This network of violence is made up of many situations of injustice which end up being "fertile ground" for the violence of the masses. Because of the restricted time, I will here limit myself to pointing out some of those situations visibly present in Europe and which should seriously question us about how many of us feel we are called to be constructors of peace on this continent. In Europe, which is officially considered to be a "club of the rich", there are 60 million *poor*, i.e., people who receive less than half of the "per capita" income of the country to which they belong. *Unemployment* is very high, especially among the young and women, so that many are exposed to an insecure life with poor perspectives for the future, but, what is worse, it is euphemistically considered to be "labour flexibility" which has the break-up of the family as a consequence.

Emigration often involves marginalisation, inequality and injustice, the result of the rejection and non-acceptance of the real human condition of the other. Migrants are often accepted for their working capacity, their productivity in the more strenuous work, forgetting that beside their body there is a person, a religion, a culture. *Women*, in many cases, continue to suffer discrimination, mistreatment, domestic violence. There is *Fundamentalism*, from which intolerance and the negation of the other come. *Politics*, dominated by neo-liberal ideology and which, in many cases, looks only to maintaining power, avoiding the international, moral and democratic modes of control, making political use of religion in order to legitimise warring conflicts with other cultures. Such conflicts, in the majority of cases, hide or conceal other "inadmissible" interests and, on not infrequent occasions, it is fundamentalism of a religious kind. The so-called *religion of consumerism*, the result of which is the fever for having, for possessions, for trying new sensations. All this and other situations constitute a real threat to peace, since they form part of "cultural violence", if they are not already part of "direct violence", which ends up being "structural violence", the immediate cause of "direct violence". These situations cannot leave us, who claim to be disciples of Jesus, indifferent. Jesus entrusted to His disciples the mission of bringing peace wherever they went: "Whatever house you go into, let your first words be "Peace to this house" (*Lk 10,5*). Constructing peace, sowing peace, being workers for peace is not, for those chosen to follow the footprints of Jesus, an option along with others, but is a real gospel duty.

22nd October 2004, Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General OFM

ITALY - II Meeting of the Governing Council of the PAA

The "Governing Council" of the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum met for the second time in the General Curia from the 27th to 28th September. The "Council" carries out the function of being an institutional link between the PAA and the General Curia for the purpose of having a better coordination in achieving the aims of the Athenaeum, the Study Centre of the Order. This meeting follows on the Colloquium of the 26-28 May 2004, during which the academic identity of a Pontifical Study Centre in Rome at the service of an international Order was amply reflected upon. During that time, an "outline of the academic project", on which the academic community will work on

various levels during the coming months, was redacted. The object to be achieved is that of a shared project for the renewal of the PAA, together with a revision of the Statutes and Regulations. The academic project regards the institutional purpose of the PAA, the professors, the students and the administration. A very important chapter of the new academic project will be dedicated to the relationship of the PAA to the affiliated Study Centres and other Study Centres of the Order, so that the *Antonianum* might be an expression of the international nature of the Order. The Governing Council will meet again on the 14th and 15th January 2005.

BELGIUM – *New Friars prepare for the mission*

The “Notre Dame des Nations” Fraternity received the fourth group of Friars disposed to the missionary projects of the Order. At the end of September they arrived in Brussels and they began their period of formation on the 1st October. Present to receive them were the entire local Fraternity and the Moderator General for the Missions, Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli.

The new group is composed of six Friars of whom three are French-speaking and three are English-speaking. All have the continent of Africa as their destination. Three of them, Br. Miroslav Babic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Province of Holy Cross in Sarajevo), Br. Paul Kim from Korea and Br. Florian Reith from Germany (Province of Thuringen), will go to the Province of St. Francis in Africa and Madagascar.

Br. Leopold Micic from Croatia (Province of Zara) will form part of the new Fraternity in Khartoum in Sudan. Br.

Barnaba Dziekan, from the Province of Katowice in Poland, a missionary for 14 years in the Republic of Central Africa, will go to Morocco. Br. Angelo Redaelli, of the Province of Milan (Italy), is destined for the Foundation in Congo-Brazzaville.

As all have a common destination, the programme of formation is oriented towards the deep study of African cultural, religious and social contexts. A series of experiences, meetings and contacts with missionary and multi-cultural realities will be added to this.

The new missionaries have been granted a singular privilege: among the corps of formators are Br. Hermann Schalück and Br. Giacomo Bini, ex-Ministers General. The Minister General himself, Br. José R. Carballo, will give them their “missionary mandate” at the end of the preparatory period.

POLAND - *10 years of the Franciscan Centre for Eastern Europe and Northern Asia*

On the occasion of the X anniversary of the Franciscan Centre for Eastern Europe and Northern Asia in Warsaw, the Commission “Service for Dialogue” of the Order of Friars Minor met in the Polish Capital on the 10th and 11th September 2004. The Franciscan Centre was born in February 1994 for the support of the Friar Minor presence in the countries of the ex-Soviet Union following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The duties entrusted to the new structure were the formation of Friars and the beginning of a process of dialogue with the Orthodox Churches where the new Franciscan presences were beginning. The Warsaw Centre, initially dependent on the Minister General, is entrusted today to the Polish Province of St. Mary of the Angels, even though the change has not modified the duties or vocation. The meeting of the “Service for Dialogue” Commission furnished the opportunity to evaluate activities in the ecumenical area on the part of our Order. It was re-affirmed that Franciscan spirituality and charism always end up being a

valid process of ecumenism and dialogue. The importance of the work carried out up to now by the Warsaw Centre and its validity as a project of dialogue and evangelisation in the countries of Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, in a spirit of openness and dialogue of the Church, were re-affirmed. A further effort at inculturation in the places where the Friars are present is necessary through sharing the life of the people in order to serve the Gospel better and thereby make it more intelligible to all peoples and cultures. The Commission encouraged those responsible for the Centre to strengthen ecumenical dialogue, cultural activity and the preparation of Friars for the “implantatio Ordinis”. Present were: Br. Miguel Vallecillo, Definitor General, President of the Commission, some professors of the Ecumenical Centre of Venice, the Minister Provincial Br. Marek Wach, the Friars of the Russia-Kazakhstan Foundation gathered in Warsaw for a spiritual Chapter.

ITALY – *International Council for Evangelisation and Mission*

“Misit vos in universo mundo”. In the light of these words of St. Francis, the International Council for Evangelisation and Mission met in the St. Rose House of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Grottaferrata (Italy), from the 13th to 19th October 2004. Delegates from the 15 Conferences of the Order and the entire General Secretariat participated in the meeting. The objective was to bring all into the new organisation and vision of the Order, to identify methods of missionary evangelisation for our Fraternities.

The first phase was dedicated to “Reading of the present world in the perspective of evangelisation” (presentation by Prof. A. Pieretti) and to understanding the new sensitivities of the Order, “Franciscan mission and evangelisation at the beginning of the third millennium” (presentation of Br. Giacomo Bini). A panoramic vision of the present situation and of the proposals from the Conferences was then offered

through the reports of the Delegates.

Following reflection in linguistic groups the final text, which offers suggestions and proposals for animation in the spirit of evangelisation and mission, was drawn up.

Among the proposals, the invitation to constitute, in the provincial and interprovincial ambiances, Secretariats for Evangelisation and Mission, to promote meetings on all levels and to insert experiences of evangelisation and ‘ad-gentes’ mission into the formation programmes of the young Friars are pointed out. The importance of organising congresses on new evangelisation and mission on the continental or cultural area levels was also identified.

The presence and contribution offered by the General Definitors Br. Luis Cabrera, Br. Ignazio Muro and Br. Ambrogio Van Si were precious and encouraging. The Minister General, Br. José R. Carballo, gave a reflection on

the method of “evangelising in a fragmented world”. The pilgrim participants went to the Franciscan places in the Rieti Valley on one day. The Council, finally, presented a

list of Delegates for the “Executive Committee”, which will have the task of putting into practice all that is decided by the Council itself, to the General Definitory.

ITALY/AUSTRIA - *IV Chapter of Mats of the Provinces of Trent and Tyrol*

Seventy-five Friars from the Provinces of St. Vigil (Trent) and of Bl. Engelbert Kolland (Tyrol), met at the convent of Mezzolombardo (Trent) for the IV Chapter of Mats on the 17th September 2004, the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis. Among those invited from the neighbouring Provinces was the Minister Provincial of Venice, Br. Bruno Miele. The arrival and reception was characterised by a warm exchange of greetings followed by Midday Prayer in the Church and a procession to the meeting hall singing the Litany of the Franciscan Saints. After prayers there was an exchange of experiences and some notices. The Ministers Provincial, Br. Germano Pellegrini and Br. Rupert Schwarzl, presented the history of their respective Provinces and described the present-day situation. Other interventions told of significant experiences of recent years: on-going formation of Trent Friars in Assisi; the move

towards the new Province of Bl. Engelbert; the Fraternity for evangelisation at Mezzolombardo and the Shalom Community of Popping; all interspersed by folk music and songs.

Before sitting to the table for a fraternal agape, the Mayor and Parish Priest of the town addressed the greeting and expressed their best wishes for the success of the initiative to those gathered. The lunch was organised and served by volunteers of the Prayer Group of St. Pio da Pietrelcina.

After the celebration of Evening Prayer in the Church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Friars had an appointment at the Rotary Club of Mezzocorona, a few kilometres from the convent, to greet each other with a glass of spumante and to fix the date for the next Chapter of Mats to the praise of Christ and of our father St. Francis!

ITALY - *Mission ... on the highway*

Whoever travelled the Milan-Naples highway on Sunday 29th August and stopped at the service area of Cantagallo would certainly have noticed something unusual. On the way to the bar, a poster gave the news: “Time-table of Masses, adoration, confessions”, while in the service area a camper was parked with young people, Friars and Sisters, around it. What was happening? An idea thought of over two years ago was being realised: to offer the possibility to participate in Mass and a “spiritual rest” to those caught up in the August traffic. The motorists who stopped at a service station met Friars, Sisters and young volunteers who invited them to Mass, confession or to dialogue besides getting a rest on their journey, a fill-up and coffee. The idea took flesh through the disposition of

Mr. Lopresti of the Highway Society, the collaboration of Msgr. Mazza, director of tourist pastoral activity of the Italian Episcopal Conference and the local Pastors and volunteers. Three service areas, in which a Church or chapel was available, were chosen: Cantagallo, close to Bologna, the Church of the Highway of St. John the Baptist in Florence, the areas of Montepulciano and Fiano Romano. The Friars Minor of Lazio, Tuscany and Lombardy, priests, young marchers and Franciscan Youth (You.Fra), the “Sentinels of the morning” of Florence and Verona, took part in the initiative. The animation was undertaken during the two Sundays of greatest traffic in Italy: the 1st and 29th August.

REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO - *A Friar Minor at entrance of the Governing Captains*

Besides being among the smallest, the Republic of San Marino is certainly among the oldest democracies of the world. Founded in the second half of the III century by St. Marino d'Arbe, it is governed in accordance with an old ordinance. The republic is governed for six months by two “governing captains”, heads of state who preside over the parliament called “The Great and General Council”. The ancient city was crossed by a solemn cortege composed of the members of the Council, the diplomatic corps, the governing captains and the official speaker. For the inauguration of the new captains, on Saturday 1st October 2004, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the San Marino Republic entrusted the official prayer to a Friar Minor from the Custody of the Holy Land, Br. Ibrahim

Faltas. Br. Ibrahim, long-time director of the Holy Land College in Bethlehem, was recently appointed Pastor of Jerusalem.

The Franciscan from the Holy Land described the arduous task entrusted to the sons of Francis of Assisi who guard the Holy Places, to those present in the Public Palace, seat of the Government of the Republic of San Marino.

“The world needs peace - Br. Faltas said, making the words of the Pope his own – but there will be no peace in the world until there is peace in the Holy Land”. Addressing the new governors, he exhorted them to make themselves constructors of peace in a world lacerated by conflicts.

Franciscan Bookmark

• MARTIGNETTI S. RICHARD, **Saint Bonaventure's Tree of Life**, Editing Fathers of Quaracchi (Grottaferrata

2004), pp 336. The book offers a profound study of the theology of “The Tree of Life”, one of the major mystical

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treasures of the Saint of Bagnoregio. The author, a Friar Minor of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of New York in the USA, acquired a doctorate in Franciscan Spirituality at the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum in Rome in 2002. He is Guardian of the General Curia of the Friars Minor in Rome and a teacher of spirituality at the PAA.

The text can be had from the *Frati Editori di Quaracchi*, Collegio S. Bonaventura, via Vecchia per Marino, 28/30, 00146 Grottaferrata (Roma) ITALY.

Fax +39.06.94551267 eMail quaracchi@ofm.org

or *Provincial Curia/Book Orders*, 125 Thompson St. New York, NY 10012.

Fax +1.212.5338034 eMail armofm@aol.com

• FORTHOMME BERNARD, *Par excès d'amour* (Through an excess of love), Editions Franciscaines (Paris

2004), pp 36. Br. Bernard, the author, a Friar Minor Professor of theology and a specialist in religious psychology, describes, in a simple and brief way, the extraordinary relationship which exists between the stigmata of Christ Crucified and that of Francis of Assisi, and also proposes an historical, mystical and psychological analysis of the significance of the stigmata for contemporary man.

The texts can be requested from

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Small/Big News

• The musical "Clare of God", written and directed by Carlo Tedeschi and interpreted by more than 30 actors was presented in front of the Church of San Damiano in Assisi, on the 11th and 12th August 2004. The work acquired great theatre success and gave pleasure to thousands of spectators. It tells, in music, the spiritual adventure of Clare of Assisi. The profit made during the presentations was given to the Poor Clare monastery in Rwanda.

• The course for Formators of the Order of Friars Minor was held at the International College of St. Anthony in Rome, in Greccio and Assisi from the 6th to 29th October 2004. 50 Friars from all over the world participated. The initiative was promoted and organised by the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies.

• Br Joaquin Echeverry of the Holy Faith Province in Colombia, who will work in the General Secretariat for Evangelisation has arrived at the General Curia. The arrival of Br Joaquin completes the organisation of the Secretariat composed of Br. Nestor Schwerz, Secretary General for Evangelisation; Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli, Moderator for the "ad gentes" missions; Br Joaquin Echeverry, Moderator for Franciscan Schools and Colleges and Br. Joy Prakash, Assistant of the Secretariat

• Fr. John Quigley, OFM, is the new executive director of Franciscans International, the non-governmental organisation of the Franciscan Family at the United Nations and Geneva. With his new responsibilities, Br. John will coordinate the activities of animation, fund raising and identification of the violations of human rights. Br. Quigley, was the director of the Office for Justice and Peace at the General Curia and, since 1998, of the Office of FI in Geneva.

• The meeting of the MEFRA (Central Europe) and of the COPEF (France and Belgium) Conferences with the Minister and Definitory General took place in Rome from the 6th to 12th October. The 14 Ministers Provincial were from Austria, Belgium France, Germany, Holland, Hungary Romania and Switzerland. They were guided by Jakab Varnai, General Definitory. A Mass in suffrage for Br. Henk Geraedts, Dutch Provincial and President of MEFRA, prematurely deceased on the 3rd August 2004, was celebrated during the meeting.

• A meeting between the Ministers Provincial of MEFRA, the Director of Missionszentrale, Br. Stefano Ottenbreit, and his staff of collaborators, was held in the General Curia, Rome, on the 12th October 2004.

New Ministers Provincial

• **Br. Julio Cesar Bunader** of the Province of the Assumption of Rio de la Plata (Argentina).

• **Br. Rupert Schwarzl** of the Province of Bl. Engelbert Kolland (Austria and Italy).

New Visitators General

• **Br. José Ángel Eguiguren Iraola** (Prov. of Arantzazu in Spain) for the Prov. of Cartagena in Spain.

• **Br. Evencio Herrera** (Prov. Sts. Francis and James, Jalisco in Mexico) for the Prov. of XII Apostles in Peru.

• **Br. Luis Cabrera Herrera** (Definitory General) for the College of Penitentiaries of St. John Lateran (Vatican).

• **Br. Juan María Huerta Muro** (Prov. of Junipero Serra in Mexico) for the Prov. Of Holy Trinity in Chile.

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