

## The Pontifical University Antonianum: an institute open to knowledge

*The elevation to a Pontifical University of the Antonianum was celebrated with a public act on 9th March 2005*

The recognition of our *Antonianum* as a Pontifical University arrives at a particularly significant moment for our Order: the celebration of the *grace of our origins* in 2008 of 800 years since the foundation of the Order of Friars Minor, for which we will begin to prepare ourselves next October. Taking advantage of this *grace*, the universal Fraternity has engaged in a process of *re-foundation* which, in creative fidelity, as the Church asks us, and in turning to the essentials, as the Pentecost 2003 Chapter asks us, is leading us to re-possess the founding charism through responding better to the demands of our vocation/mission and to the challenges which the present-day world is presenting to us. We are fully convinced, therefore, that, together with sanctity of life and closeness to simple people, study is a fundamental requirement, as was noted in his time by Thomas of Eccleston, who affirmed that the Order of Friars Minor rests on two pillars: sanctity of life and studies, and which John Paul II reminded us of in his message to the General Chapter of 1991.

This need of studies to guarantee a quality of life and of witness leads us, not only to appreciate “ad intra” studies, for ourselves, but to work at placing ourselves in the new areas of contact in which culture is created and transmitted. We are certain that the Universities and Colleges are privileged platforms for these areopaghi. It is significant that an Order such as ours, which is not tied to any specific activity and even less to that of education, has some 14 Universities, 6 Faculties of Theology, more than 50 theological-philosophical Institutes and more than 150 Colleges at the moment. The Pontifical University Antonianum is, undoubtedly, the first loved of our Order because, although much smaller in numbers than other academic institutes of the Order, it is considered “its main centre of studies” (RFF 122,1). The Pontifical University

Antonianum must be characterised by its nature as a University, Pontifical and Franciscan.

In so far as it is a University, the PUA maintains its own physiognomy, which comes from the four faculties of which it is composed, that is, the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Biblical and Archaeological Sciences, the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Canon Law, and must be characterised as an institute open to the universality of knowledge, offering its contribution to the creation of a culture in the service of man and, as such, to the creation of a culture, which goes beyond the criteria of practicality, of efficiency and of competition, principals which are familiar to the economy and to the University itself. Therefore, following the centuries old tradition of the great representatives of the Franciscan School, the PUA must bet on the “diaconia” of knowledge in the service of man, thus overcoming that power of knowledge which exploits man.

Dear Professors, do all that is possible for our University, in close collaboration with the Pontifical Marian Academy, the Scotus Commission, the College of St. Bonaventure of Grottaferrata and the other Pontifical Universities of Rome, to be a cultural workshop in which theology, philosophy, the human and natural sciences dialogue constructively. A University which holds itself to be such must be characterised as an institute which creates bridges, pays great attention to dialogue with others, not in a periodical and strategic manner, but as a real and proper method of working and as an ongoing inspiration of thought and research conducted with scientific rigour. *Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General and Grand Chancellor of the PUA*

(full text at [http://www.ofm.org/wordpress/it\\_02.php](http://www.ofm.org/wordpress/it_02.php))

### LIBYA – *The Friars Minor in Libya*

Br. Francesco Bravi, Vicar General, and Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli, Moderator for the Missions, made a fraternal visit to the Friars who live and work in Libya from the 26<sup>th</sup> February to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005. On the outward journey they made a brief stop in Malta, where they met the Provincial and some Definitors. The Maltese Province is juridically responsible for this presence. On arrival in Libya, they were received by the two Franciscan Vicars Apostolic and by the Friars of the two Fraternities.

There are two Apostolic Vicariates in Libya entrusted to the Order: Tripoli, presided over by Msgr. Giovanni

Martinelli, OFM and Benghazi with Msgr. Silvestro C. Magro, OFM, with whom our two Fraternities cooperate.

The Fraternity which lives in the church of St. Francis in Tripoli is composed of Br. Melito Pinili, Guardian, Br. Celso Larracas, Philippino and Br. Gabrail Annulla Bihit Abdul Malek of Egypt. There are also two diocesan priests: Daniel Farrugia (Maltese), Vicar General, and Amet Kual (Sudanese), a young priest incardinated into the Vicariate. Another Italian priest, don Gianni Bressan, lives and works in the region of Sebha. The Friars and the two priests live in the same house with the Bishop.

The other Fraternity lives in the church of the Immaculate Conception in Benghazi and is composed of Br. Amado Baranquel, Guardian, Br. Ronnie Asuero, Philippino, Br. Antoni Boleslaw Maciejowski and Br. Virgilio Patuiski, Poles.

There is also a Salesian priest, Tadeusz Kierbiedz, who is the Vicar General and normally lives in the city of Derna. The Friars, together with a Philippino diocesan priest, live in the same house, while the Bishop has a small apartment in the same building. The main work is that of the pastoral care of many foreign Christian communities (Philippinos, Indians, Poles, Italians, Arabs, English- and French-

speaking Africans); the visit and celebration of the sacraments in the different areas of work in the desert; the care of the female religious communities.

The most recent documents of the Order and the programme of preparation for the celebration of the VIII centenary of the foundation of the Order in particular were given to the Friars with whom a time of cordial and open meeting, of prayer and sharing, were spent.

Br. Francesco and Br. Vincenzo later met with the religious belonging to the various institutes which work in the Vicariate of Tripoli.

### ITALY – *Coordination for financial aid*

There are Provinces and Custodies in the Order which are experiencing financial difficulties in providing the essential necessities for fraternal life and formation of candidates and Friars. Following the teaching of our father St. Francis, these Entities have recourse to the table of the Lord and manifest their need to the Minister General and the worldwide Fraternity.

In our Order, on the general and regional levels, different organisations to face this situation have sprung up. Four of these organisations have felt the desire to meet regularly and to coordinate the activities for improving the way of concretely expressing solidarity within the Order: The Commission of the General Curia for Financial Request (CFR), the General Secretariat for Franciscan Missions in Waterford, (Wisconsin USA-GSFM/W), Missionszentrale der Franziskaner with its central seat in Bonn (MZF) and the Filial Office of Vienna, Austria, Franziskaner für Mittel- und Osteuropa (FMO).

After a first meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2004, a second session was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005 with the participation of Br. Sereno Baiardi (GSFM/W), Br. Stephan Ottenbreit (MZF), Br. Ulrich Zankanella (FMO) together with the members of the CFR: the Vicar General Br. Francesco Bravi (president), Br. Finian McGinn, Br. Luis Cabrera, Br. Nestor Schwerz, Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Br. Giancarlo Lati and Br. James Peruzzi (secretary). As a “Group of coordination for financial aid”, these organisations have initiated communication between them about the requests received. A study of a renewal of the process for financial requests to the Curia has been begun; the new procedures could come into force from 2006. The group is seeking ways for even closer cooperation in the hope of making the Friars sensitive to the present needs and to find the resources necessary to respond to such needs.

### HUNGARY – *Fusion of the Provinces of Friars Minor*

As a result of the new legislation in force in our Order, the General Government studied the situation of the Province of St. Mary in Hungary through an extraordinary visit.

Following a reflection on the state of the two Hungarian Provinces, three fundamental decisions were taken: The Provinces in Hungary, the Marian and Capistran, will have to form a single Province; this process should be completed by 2008, there being the possibility for the two Provinces to anticipate this date; until the birth of the new Entity, the Province of St. Mary will preserve the title of “Province”.

Fr. Mihály Böjte (Province of St. Stephen, King, in Transylvania, Romania) has been appointed Delegate General, with the duties described in the decree of appointment, to accompany the preparation of the fusion of the Provinces in Hungary. Br. Francesco Bravi, the Vicar General, informed the two Provincial Definitories of the decision during a common meeting held in Budapest on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

The two Provincial Definitories, under the guidance of the Delegate General, have already begun the preparation of the union.

### GREAT BRITAIN - *Franciscan International Study Centre of Canterbury*

The Franciscan International Study Centre at Canterbury, England, has entered into partnership with the University of Wales, Lampeter, to enable students taking its courses to receive state recognition of their efforts. This year there are students from 21 religious institutes and 24 countries at the Centre. They are enrolled in: Certificate in Franciscan Studies, Certificate in Franciscan Formation, Franciscan Formators’ Course and in a BA Theology programme. In September 2005 a MA course in Franciscan Studies, allowing a student to take 6 modules over a year followed

by the writing of a dissertation, will be launched. Others come to the Centre for the more restful purpose of a Sabbatical period in which they can take advantage of a wide variety of modules taught by internationally renowned scholars and combine these with a programme led by invited experts in spirituality, who guide the students through different forms of prayer and spiritual development. For further information on Franciscan studies and Sabbaticals contact Sr. Margaret McGrath FMSJ at [franstudies@franciscans.ac.uk](mailto:franstudies@franciscans.ac.uk); for Ministry and

BA contact Br. Philippe Yates OFM (Principal) [ministry@franciscans.ac.uk](mailto:ministry@franciscans.ac.uk).

There is also an intensive English course of a minimum of 50 hours over two weeks, 1-12 August 2005, at the Centre.

The cost is £630 (sterling) and includes accommodation in single study-bedrooms, meals and excursions. For further information contact Fax +44 1227 768648 or by email to [elizabeth.m@franciscans.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.m@franciscans.ac.uk).

### ITALY – *Brother Francis, a magazine of Franciscan culture*

Since 2001, on the initiative of the OFM Province of the Apostles Peter and Paul of Lazio, *Frate Francesco, a magazine of Franciscan culture*, continues, with a new series, the activity of the historic title which has reached its 71<sup>st</sup> year of life. It is a six-monthly magazine (issued in April and November) and avails of the cooperation of the “Higher School of Medieval and Franciscan Studies” at the Pontifical University Antonianum and of the support of the OFM Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Puglia and Molise. The profound revision of the magazine keeps its Franciscan identity unchanged and proposes contributions drawn from the vast heritage which, during the course of many centuries, has made indispensable reference to the event of Francis of Assisi. Well-founded documentation, critical research, clarifying contributions, thematic analysis, suggestions for reading; general and local themes, given at

times in various languages, deal rigorously with complex Franciscan topics as components of the social, cultural and religious history of the West.

The proposal to deal with the phenomenon of *Franciscanism* in its various presentations, without limits of time or subject, and of becoming a valid scientific instrument has been rewarded by the collaboration of a great number of scholars of clear international repute and by an ever-increasing number of subscribers.

*Frate Francesco*, besides the magazine, also promotes annual congresses and publications of Franciscan subjects and collaborates with other Entities in numerous initiatives with a Franciscan theme. Information on subscriptions by e-mail to: [frate.francesco@iol.it](mailto:frate.francesco@iol.it) or at the web-site: <http://www.antonianum.ofm.org/studimedievali/fratefrancesco.html>.

### ROMANIA – *An ecumenical bridge “Assisi-Timisoara”*

A meeting between the Commission for Dialogue of the Friars Minor, Nicolae Corneanu, Orthodox Metropolitan, and representatives of various ecclesial communities was held in Timisoara, Romania, on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2005. The initiative was born of the request of the Orthodox Metropolitan after a course of spiritual exercises lived by Franciscan Friars and Sisters with Orthodox Monks and Nuns in Timisoara during November 2003. The Metropolitan wrote to the Minister General of the Friars Minor manifesting an interest in continuing and stabilising the relationships between the Metropolitan and the Franciscans. The idea of creating an ideal bridge open to all levels, which would have Assisi and Timisoara as its bases, in order to express the harmony between Franciscan and Orthodox spirituality, was born. The visit of Br. Miguel Vallecillo, Definitor General, and Br. Teclé Vetralli, president and secretary of the Commission for Dialogue, represents a response to that desire. The Catholic Bishop, the Greek-Catholic Bishop, the Baptist Pastor, the Calvinist Pastor, the President of the Jewish Community, representatives of the Metropolitan and local Friars were

present at the meeting. Some reference points for a common project in the near future were drawn up during the dialogue: spiritual exercises and experiences, exchange of visits, congresses on spirituality, a library of an ecumenical and Franciscan nature, and editorial initiatives. A section on Franciscanism was set up in the Metropolitan theological library, which assures a continuous presence of the Franciscan message at the disposition of the students of theology. A book, in Romanian and Italian, containing the biographies of Orthodox and Franciscan Saints is being compiled with the aim of making them known, not through situations of conflict which have often been characteristic, but through the best testimonies offered by the Saints.

The first fruit of the meeting was the willingness to be involved by the Friars Minor of Transylvania, who appointed a Delegate to represent the Order on the organising committee.

We can say that the meeting was a powerful experience of ecumenism understood, not so much as an official agreement in the area of doctrine, but as a sharing of concrete experiences of Christian life.

### *Franciscan Bookmark*

• BUFFON Giuseppe, **The Franciscans in the Holy Land (1869-1889)**, Religion and politics. Institutional research, Les Éditions du Cerf - Les Éditions Franciscaines (Paris, 2005). The Franciscans of the Holy Land were seen as “useless”, “backward”, “ignorant”, “inefficient” religious... They are still there today. Why have they endured? At the end of the XIX century, the French Republic, protecting power, tried to get rid of them in favour of “national” religious congregations capable of facing up to Protestant activism supported by England and

Germany. French diplomats even obtained support from Rome. The Custody opposed the powers of European nations through its internationalism and the anarchy which impregnated it. Its organisational structure, in fact, escaped all control and its strength and reason for resistance lay precisely in this. The research proposes an interpretation, the interest in which goes beyond the case examined. The reason is the very functioning of the Franciscan Order, a mixture of correct balance between democracy and negotiated dependence: a kind of “rational anarchy”, which

allowed the Custody to resist European political power by preserving a strong Franciscan identity. The text, in French, was published with the help of the Pontifical University Antonianum.

- **BINI Giacomo, Dare, sisters**, a journey to re-found the consecrated life, Edizioni Messaggero (Padova, 2005). The volume, under the guidance of Sr. Diana Papa, OSC, gathers together some discourses and homilies addressed to the Poor Clares by Br. Giacomo Bini and recorded on the occasion of his visits to the Federations of Poor Clares or Provinces of Friars Minor in Italy. Though at different times and places, Br. Giacomo offered unpublished aspects on formation, contemplation, itinerancy, vows, structures, complementarity between the First and Second Orders, inter-generational relations, formation to relationships, Mary, mission to the world in the Church. The text offers

an opportunity to enter into the world of contemplatives and to share with them the continuous search for God in one's own life and in the today of history. It is an occasion to approach them and to accept that, on the margins, there are people dedicated to making the invisible visible by embodying the God-with-us.

- **AA.VV., Instruments of Peace, guided by the Holy Spirit** (Acts of the International Congress of JPIC, 2000), COMPI (Assisi, 2005). The Acts of the "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" Congress, held in Vossenack (Germany) in 2000, constitute a mine of news, analysis, reflections and proposals offered to all those who, with the eyes of Francis of Assisi, love creation, the glory of the Most High God, and the fortunes of man, made in His image and likeness.

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### **Small/Big News**

- On the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the canonical recognition of the mortal remains of Venerable Servant of God, Br. Gabriele Allegra, having been carried out, they were taken to a new burial chapel, constructed by the Friars Minor of Sicily in the Franciscan church of St. Blaise in Acireale (Catania).

Transported from Hong Kong to Acireale in 1986, the mortal remains of the untiring "Apostle of the Word" were placed in a provisional tomb, the centre of special devotion on the part of the People of God. Many Sicilian Friars, with the Minister Provincial, Br. Carmelo Finocchiaro, the Archbishops of Acireale and of Catania, the OFM General Postulator and a great number of SFO were present. On the following Sunday, the 30<sup>th</sup> January, the Servant of God was remembered by Mgrs. Paolo Romeo, Apostolic Nuncio to Italia, in a solemn celebration in which more than a thousand faithful from all over Sicily participated.

- On the occasion of the tragedy which struck South-East Asia, Br. François Paquette, of the Prov. of St. Joseph of Montreal, with 20 volunteers from Quebec (Canada), co-ordinated the sending of help from Los Angeles (USA) to the population effected by the tsunami. Among the volunteers there were also two Friars from Oakland, of the Prov. of St. Barbara in California. Br. François had the task

of following up on the requests for help coming from more than 190 religious structures (Buddhist pagodas, Hindu Temples and Muslim Mosques) in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and Thailand. Some of these centres received up to 400 refugees. Br. François is an adviser in the General Secretariat for inter-religious affairs at the UN.

- The Commission of "Service for Dialogue" and the General Secretariat for Evangelisation are offering a course of Ongoing Formation on ecumenical and inter-religious Dialogue to the Friars Minor in Istanbul, in Italian and Spanish. The course will be held from 23<sup>rd</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2005. The topics are: *Formation to dialogue in the Franciscan charism, Ecumenical, Islamic-Christian and Jewish-Christian Dialogue*. A visit of 3 days to the places of "the churches of the Apocalypse" is programmed. The cost of the course is € 500,00. Interested Friars may send their booking applications to Br. Rubén Tierrablanca, by email: [rube2000@libero.it](mailto:rube2000@libero.it) or fax: +90.212.2432791 before, and not later than, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005. The first 20 Friars inscribed will receive, together with their confirmation, the detailed programme of the course.

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### **New Visitors General**

- **Br. Rafael Colomer** (Valencia, Spain) Visitor for the Prov. of Bl. Junipero Serra (Mexico).
- **Br. João Inacio Müller** (St. Francis of Assisi, Brazil) Visitor for the Prov. of St. Anthony of Padua, Recife, Brazil.
- **Br. Peter Williams**, (Immaculate Conc., Great Britain) Visitor for the Prov. St. Francis in Africa and Madagascar.
- **Br. Williband Hopfgarten** (Bl. Engelbert Kolland, Austria and Italy) Visitor Custody of Christ the King, Switzerland.
- **Br. Ghislain Ndjonji** (St. Benedict the African, Dem. Rep. Congo), Assistant Visitor for Friars of Prov. Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Croatia) present in the Congo.

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

- from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> April – Meeting with the Ministers and Definitories Provincial of Spain and Portugal, Madrid (Spain).
- from 7<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April – Visit to the Friars Minor of Thailand, Taiwan, Myanmar and Vietnam.
- from 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April – Spiritual Exercises of the General Definitory

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