

## Habemus Papam: Benedict XVI

*From the Letter to the Order of Friars Minor*

*Te Deum Laudamus!* Yes, the hymn of praise and thanksgiving has been raised up from our hearts and lips today because the “community responsible for the assignment of the keys of the Kingdom”, together with the Holy Spirit, has chosen the 265<sup>th</sup> successor of Peter in the person of Benedict XVI.

Following days of silence, commotion, reflection and grateful memory for the long Pontificate of John Paul II, the Great, who led us by the hand during the final decade of the XX century, the Christian community is living the present with intense joy and gratitude: the Lord has granted it a new Pastor according to His heart, a Pastor who will have the task of leading it as “it sets out” at the beginning of the third millennium. A new season of grace for the Church has blossomed. In the Sistine Chapel, in fact, the invitation of the Risen One, *Follow me!*, has sounded once again. This time the invitation was addressed to Card.

Joseph Ratzinger, who, adhering to the plan of the divine will, has “abandoned” everything and accepted to guide the Church towards the future, trusting only in the promise of the Risen One: “Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (*Mt 28,20*). At the dawn of this new journey, we Friars Minor, in communion with the whole Church and sharing in the expectations of men of good will, wish to assure Pope Benedict XVI of our obedience and reverence, in accordance with the heart of St. Francis, and of our disposition to go along with his wishes. We promise “the simple and humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord” never to let him lack our prayers, our affection and our cooperation. May the Risen Lord bless Benedict XVI and, with His grace, support the ministry entrusted to him so that he may be able to guide us “in the knowledge of Christ, to His love and to true joy”. (Fr. José Rodríguez Carballo ofm)

## Goodbye John Paul II “the great”

*At 8.37 on Saturday evening, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005, the Cardinal Chamberlain, Eduardo Martínez Somalo, following centuries long tradition formally established death calling the Pope by his baptismal name three times. The Master of the Chamber, took the ring of the fisherman from the finger of the Pontiff John Paul II. He had died. His Pontificate had ended!*

*We here give part of the message of the Minister General to the Order on the passing of John Paul II.*

The long pontificate of Karol Wojtyła has come to a close precisely during the Easter Octave, in accordance with the benevolent design of divine providence. [...] The Lord has taken him into His arms to give him thanks, because, in accordance with the vocation he received, he confirmed, right to the last Instant of his life, his brothers and sisters in the faith through word, gospel life and, finally, through the mysterious power of suffering lived and transformed into a testimony, which made St. Peter's Square the “heart of the world”. The silence of John Paul II during the last days of his earthly life became an eloquent word giving meaning and value to the words spoken, but not always heeded, during the 27 years of his profound and prophetic teaching. To the thanks of the Risen Christ there was quickly added that of the Church, of each believer, of the men and women of good will, of the young generations to whom he always indicated audacious horizons. Our thanks, as Friars Minor, also wishes to join this chorus of gratitude because of the particular link that has always existed between our Order and “the lord Pope”, especially for the paternal and solicitous care with which John Paul II followed our Fraternity from 1978 until now, always offering us concrete signs of affection, friendship and closeness. We will have the opportunity to return to his teaching, both

Franciscan and Clarean, especially on the occasion of the General Chapters. We express our filial gratitude to him at this moment in which Sister Death leads him to the House of the Father, by recalling some “tasks” which he wished to entrust to us as Friars Minor, almost as a spiritual testament: To observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the form of life given which Saint Francis made his own; to love and serve all men according to the example of the Poverello; to announce the Gospel is the vocation, the mission and the reason for the existence of the Friars Minor; to know how to respond to the hopes of men and women of our time with the original contribution which emanates from the characteristic experience of St. Francis; to look on St. Francis as the “forma Minorum, virtutis speculum, recti via, regula morum”; to go to the heart of the masses as “brothers of the people”; to put the Gospel at the heart of contemporary culture history by following the example of St. Francis and the great cultural tradition of the Order; to respond with our “living spirituality” the experiences of authenticity and essentiality, by living and giving witness to the values of the Franciscan charism. [...] “May You be praised my Lord for our Pope John Paul II, because “from You, Most High, he took meaning”!

---

## ITALY - *Conclave lived in Rome*

Before the Conclave, on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2005, the Fraternity of the General Curia had the Franciscan Cardinals present in Rome to supper. The Friars Minor were the best represented religious Order in the Conclave with four Elector Cardinals:

**Card. László Paskai**, O.F.M. Archbishop Emeritus of Esztergom-Budapest (Hungary), was born in Szeged on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1927. He was ordained priest the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1951 and Bishop the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1978. John Paul II made him a Cardinal on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1986.

**Card. Claudio Hummes**, O.F.M. Archbishop of Sao Paulo (Brazil) was born in Montenegro, the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre, on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1934. He was ordained priest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1958 and Bishop on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1975. John Paul II made him Cardinal on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2001.

**Card. Wilfrid Fox Napier**, O.F.M. Archbishop of Durban (South Africa) was born in Swartzberg, diocese of Kokstad, on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 1941. He was ordained priest on

25<sup>th</sup> July 1970 and Bishop on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1981. John Paul II made him Cardinal on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2001.

**Card. Carlos Amigo Vallejo**, O.F.M. Archbishop of Seville, was born in Medina de Rioseco, the Archdiocese of Valladolid, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1934. He was ordained priest on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1960 and Bishop on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1974. John Paul II made him Cardinal on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2003.

Three other Cardinals belong to the Order of Friars Minor who, having passed 80 years of age, were not among the electors: Card. **Paulo Evaristo Arns**, and Card. **Aloisio Lorscheider** (Brazil) and **Alexandre José Maria dos Santos** (Mozambique).

On Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, in communion with the universal Church which “prayed to the Lord for the gift of a Pastor in conformity with His heart”, Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General OFM, presided at the Mass “Pro Romano Pontifice eligendo” in the church of the General Curia.

---

## ITALY – *Spiritual exercises of the “under 10” Friars*

“Meeting together... , intuitions and hope” was the title of the spiritual exercises organised for the young Friars under ten years of the north of Italy, held in Armeno, in Piemonte, close to Lake d’Orta, from 28<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005. It was a time of grace and revival for the sixty young Friar participants.

It was the wise and fraternal presentation of Br. Giacomo Bini, ex-Minister General, who, as a true “big brother”, knew how to infuse joy and hope, which “set the heart on fire” during those days.

The topic treated took up some of the essential points of the Priorities of the Order: minority, prayer and devotion, evangelisation.

What determined the efficacy of such study was the plentiful mutual exchange in small groups and in assembly. The presentation of initiatives born in the Provinces after a careful reading of the signs of the times and the generous response to the interrogative on how to

live our Franciscan charism in the present was a useful contribution. Br. Giacomo left great hope and enthusiasm in the young Friars with this challenge: “It is not the quantity of services we offer which is primary, but the quality of our charismatic life”.

The meeting with Mother Canopi, the Abbess of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Julius, who spoke about the prophecy of the Consecrated Life, was important and significant.

Finally, the Secretary General for Formation and Studies of the Order, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, highlighted how this meeting should be a “prophetic sign” of collaboration between Provinces.

At the end of the course, the young Friar participants left confirmed in the conviction that the “confines” of a Province are and must only be imaginary lines which lapse definitively when occasions to become “open doors” of communication are found in dialogue and collaboration.

---

## ITALY – *Conference of the Franciscan Family and Franciscans International*

A meeting was held between the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) and the Board of Franciscans International (FI) in the General Curia of the Friars Minor in Rome in the afternoon of the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005. The members of the Board present were: Sr. Denise Boyle, FMDM, President, Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins, OSF, Fr. Joao Benedito Ferreira de Araujo, OFMConv, Ana Maria Olmeto Ramos, OFS, Br. Markus Heinze, OFM, Attilio Galimberti, OFS, Lucy Almirañez, OFS, Fr. Goran Dabic, TOR, Fr. Tewelde Beyene, OFMCap. Br. John Quigley, OFM, Executive Director of FI, and Anne Niehaus, Executive Secretary, were with them. The representatives of the Franciscan NGO described the work carried out at the UN in the New York and Geneva Offices. It is hoped that, in the near future, each continent will have a FI

Office. The commitment to “give a voice to whoever has no voice” has led to an internal re-think in order to offer an evermore defined service in line with the expectations of the Franciscan world. One of the challenges that is obligatory to face up to is that of having the values which animate FI penetrate the formation of the Friars and Franciscan evangelisation. It is, therefore, urgent to make the work of the NGO better known in the Franciscan world. The Conference of the Franciscan Family, confirming its support of the work of FI, committed itself to prepare a letter in which it would emphasise its support. To guarantee a permanent link with the FI and to further reinforce its collaboration, a representative will be selected during the next meeting of the CFF. Further information about FI at: <http://www.franciscansinternational.org>

---

---

## ITALY – *International executive council for evangelisation and missions*

The Executive Committee of the Franciscan International Council for Evangelisation and Missions (FICEM), a support organism of the General Secretariat for Evangelisation, met in Rome, at the General Curia of the Friars Minor from the 29<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005. The work began with the reading of indications on the topic of evangelisation present in the document “The Grace of our Origins”.

The Committee studied and made necessary modifications to the draft of the Special Statutes for the FICEM and GSE to be presented to the General Definitory for approval. The work continued by analysing the conclusions of the last assembly, of October 2004, from which new forms and strategies for activating the change in animation in the Conferences and Provinces were identified. In particular, the Committee worked out the outline of a “provincial project of evangelisation and mission” and guidelines for the redaction of aids for missionary animation and of orientations for parochial pastoral activity. The results of the inquiry into the different pastoral presences of the Friars Minor, carried out in the previous six-year period, will be published soon. The method of classifying the new forms

and initiatives of evangelisation was reflected on and a module for the verification of missionary animation in the Entities was proposed.

The Committee defined the organisation of the next Assembly, which will be held in Santo Domingo, Central America, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006. It will deal with the topic of “Memory and Prophecy in Evangelisation and Missions (Yesterday and Today towards the Future)” On meeting the Committee, the Minister General, Br. Josè Carballo, thanked and encouraged the participants to continue in their service of animation in this dimension, indicating also the challenges to be faced.

The possibility of promoting missionary and evangelisation experiences for young Friars in formation was discussed. The Committee spoke of the need to recover the history of the missionary presences of the Provinces and Conferences and of the improvement of communications between the GSE and the Secretariats of the Provinces and Conferences. In the course of the work, the Committee looked at part of the film, made by a team of professionals, from which a DVD presenting the work of missionary evangelisation by the Friars Minor throughout the world will be produced.

---

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – *A seed sown in the field*

The Province of St. Benedict the African, to which about 220 Friars living in 28 fraternities scattered over four regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, belong is the most numerous presence of the Order in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo has been living through a war, in which economic interest groups and nations financing the militias are involved, for about nine years.

The territorial extension, accentuated by the lack of communications and the insecurity due to the gangs and irregular militias who assault travellers, together with the high cost of living, make the animation and management of the Province difficult.

The Definitory for Africa, Br. Amaral Bernardo Amaral, visited the Friars of the Province of St. Benedict the African in the Democratic Republic of Congo from the 19<sup>th</sup> March to the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

Br. Amaral visited the provincial Novitiate, with 14 novices, in the first days. The environmental situation is of extreme poverty, beginning with the lack of food, but it did not restrict the joyful and warm welcome reserved for Br. Amaral. “We see the care of the Minister General and of the Order for us in you”, one of the novices said.

During the following days there was a meeting with the Friars who live in the four fraternities around Lubumbashi, the capital of Katanga. Br. Amaral then passed a day with the young Friars who are living “the Franciscan year”. This is a time, after philosophical studies, dedicated to assimilating the Franciscan charism in an experience of sharing in situations of real poverty. The young Friars, they are 11, accompanied by Br. Damian Isabell, are having an

experience of sharing with the “street children”, drug addicts and with those suffering from other forms of poverty. At the end of the day’s work, together with their formator, they share, reflect and pray about the experiences they had.

Br. Amaral visited the Student House for philosophy and theology at Lubumbashi, which has 63 young students accompanied by 8 Formators from the 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March. He spent Holy Week and celebrated the Paschal Triduum there. The Definitory General visited the Fraternities of the Kasai region, meeting the Friars and Poor Clares of the Monastery of Mbujimayi from 30<sup>th</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

In the following days he met the Fraternity of Kinshasa and, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, the Friars in the region of Kivu. Br. Amaral appreciated the attention and care with which the liturgy was prepared and celebrated.

During the meeting with the young Friars, Br. Amaral evaluated the motives which spur the young to follow the Franciscan life. All expressed a desire for life in fraternity, prayer, minority and in closeness to the people, especially to those who suffer the consequences of war and violence.

The Friars Minor in the Congo have always been close to the people, sharing also their most difficult times and the “threshing” on the part of the military and irregulars.

The Province of St Benedict is the seed sown in the field which, through the prophetic presence of the Franciscan fraternity, will be able to contribute to reconciliation and peace in that land, marked by division and violence.

## *Small/Big News*

- The Conference of Ministers General of the Franciscan First Order and TOR met in the OFM General Curia on Palm Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Br. Ilija Živkovic, Minister General TOR, was absent and he was represented by the General Definitor, Fr. Fernando Scocca, TOR. The meeting began at 10.30, and was an occasion for fraternal conversation and comparison about the paths each Family is travelling. The Ministers evaluated the projects carried out in common (Inter-Franciscan Course for Formators, held in Frascati from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004) and those in preparation (project for common formation of Friars leaving for the missions, to be carried out in the 'Notre Dame des Nations' Fraternity in Brussels). The meetings of the Bursars General to share experiences in the field of administration and care of the heritage of the Franciscan Orders were evaluated as positive later on. Satisfaction with all of these initiatives was expressed by all and continuation in this direction was held to be opportune. The meeting ended with lunch with the Fraternity of the General Curia.
- The Minister General, together with a large group of Friars from Rome and others who had come from Poland for the occasion, participated in the funeral of Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square, on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
- A Mass in suffrage for Pope John Paul II was celebrated in the church of the General Curia on the 13<sup>th</sup> April. The Eucharist was presided over by the Minister General, Br. Jose Rodriguez Carballo. The Fraternity of the General Curia, together with Friars from the Houses dependent on the Minister General and from other Fraternities of Rome, took part. The church was packed due to the presence of Sisters belonging to the various Institutes of the Franciscan Family and of lay Franciscans.
- The Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) is

preparing a "Letter on Peace". The text, which was redacted by the CFF of which Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM Minister General, is the President by turn, is addressed to the humanity of our time. During the meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, held in the General Curia of the Friars Minor, Rome, Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Sr. M. Karola Thomann, President CFI-TOR; Fr. Ferdinando Scocca, Delegate of the Minister General TOR; Fr. Aurelio Laita, Delegate of the Minister General OFM Cap and Mr. Alfonso Petrone, Delegate of the Minister General SFO, dedicated the morning session to the revision and final approval of the letter. Fr. Joachim Giermek, Minister General OFM Conv was absent from the meeting because of unforeseen obligations. As a sign of solidarity and to give witness to the desire for peace to those who live in that area of conflict, it was established that one of the coming meetings of the CFF will be held in the Holy Land.

- Inscriptions are open for the Italian language course to be held in the Antonianum, Rome, this summer from the 27<sup>th</sup> August to 28<sup>th</sup> September. Please forward your applications promptly to the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies by E-mail to [formgen@ofm.org](mailto:formgen@ofm.org) or to the Rector of the Friar Students, Br. Vidal Rodriguez Lopez, at - email [vidalfray@yahoo.it](mailto:vidalfray@yahoo.it) - tel. 06.70373686 - Via Merulana 124 - 00185 Roma.
- The International Congress of Novice Masters will be held in La Verna and Assisi from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2005. The General Secretariat for Formation and Studies reminds the Friars who need **entry visas for Italy** to send on their details urgently (name and surname according to the passport; place and date of birth; nationality; full address; passport number and issuing authority; the nearest country where there is an Italian Consulate to issue a visa).

## *New Ministers Provincial*

- **Br. Ferdinando Campana** of the Province of St. James of the Marca (Italy) was re-elected Minister Provincial.
- **Br. Carmelo Finocchiaro** of the Province of Holy Name of Jesus in Sicily (Italy) was re-elected Minister Provincial.
- **Br. Marino Porcelli** of the Roman Province of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Italy) was elected Minister Provincial.
- **Br. Željko Železnjak** of the Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Croatia) was elected Minister Provincial.

## *Agenda of the Minister General*

- from **2 to 14 May** - Tempo forte of the Minister and Definitory General (Rome) in Italy.
- from **9 to 10 May** - Meeting with the Presidents of the Conferences of the Order (Rome) in Italy.
- from **25 to 27 May** - Visit to the Prov. of the Stigmata of St. Francis (Florence) in Italy.
- from **30 May to 2 June** - Participation in the Chapter of Holy Name Province (New York) in the USA.

### FRATERNITAS - OFM - Rome

Director responsible: **Gino Concetti** - Redactor: **Gianfranco Pinto Ostuni**

Internet: <http://www.ofm.org/fraternitas>. Email: [comgen@ofm.org](mailto:comgen@ofm.org)