

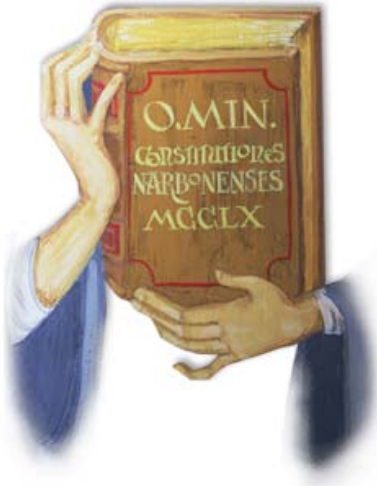


# FRATERNITAS

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## 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Constitutions of Narbonne (1260 – 2010)



**O**n April 10, 2010, there was a Study-Day in Narbonne, France, on the occasion of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitutions of Narbonne at the General Chapter of 1260. During this Chapter, the norms prepared at the General Chapter of 1239 were rearranged and completed under the direction of St. Bonaventure. They were put together in an organic body of law entitled, *Narbonian Con-*

*stitutions*. These Constitutions were updated many times and enriched by other Statutes and Capitular Acts; they are a clear picture of the phases that the Franciscan Order went through in its long history, especially in the first centuries of its existence. The presenters of this Study Day were Br. J. B. Auberger, OFM; Br. A. Menard, OFM Cap; Br. L. Bertazzo, OFM Conv; Msgr. A. Planet Bishop of Carcassonne-Narbonne; and Cardinal Franc Rode, Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated life and the Societies of Apostolic life. This last Cardinal underscored that the Constitutions are a book to hold on to, to be read always because it reveals a program of life and a divine call that entails embarking on a journey of faithfulness to God and his people in daily life. By observing these Constitutions, the religious will be persevering in his/her communion with the Church and offering the world a witness of Gospel life.

## A Novitiate for the Provinces of Italy

**T**he Coordinating Minister, Br. Peter Carfagna, ofm, convoked the Assembly of Provincial Definitors of the seven Provinces of Southern Italy (Southern COMPI) at Baronissi from March 25-27 to discuss about having an interprovincial novitiate. It was a time of listening and comparing notes, not only about this topic, but also about promoting interprovinciality as requested by the General Administration of the Order in the areas of "ongoing and initial formation, evangelization, vocational animation, and culture" (n. 28 of the COMPI Project). With regards to the common novitiate expected to begin in 2011 at Piedmont Matese, the Definitors of the same seven Provinces have unani-

mously approved its peculiar statutes, *ratio formationis*, and its formative program. They discussed about the need for discernment when encouraging and receiving vocations and seeking common ground among the Provinces. Hence, a single program of two years will be drawn up for Postulancy which foresees moments in common among the postulants. In May of 2011, at the request of the Secretariats of Evangelization, there will be an Assembly of COMPI-South which will include many sectors of evangelization of Southern Italy. The Coordinating Minister elected for the next three-year period is Br. Francesco Lanzillotta, Provincial Minister from Calabria.

## The OFM Fraternity in Figures

**A**s of December 31, 2009, there are 14,525 Friars Minor compared to 14,724 in 2008, a drop of 199. Further data: There are currently 586 Postulants, who are not part of the official count; 399 Novices; 1,426 Simply Professed; 12,700 Solemnly Professed among which 9,866 are priests; 73 Permanent Deacons; 1,462 with a clerical option; 2,332 Lay Brothers; and 280 Friars without an option. There are 6 Franciscan Cardinals; 6 Archbishops, and 107 Bishops. The total number of Friars that passed away in 2009 was 321.

The Friars are present in 110 countries: In Africa and the Middle East there are 1109; Latin America 3,505; North America 1,510; Asia-Oceania 1,295; Western Europe 4,612; Eastern Europe 2,494. The universal fraternity is structured in 102 Provinces, 8 Autonomous Custodies, 14 Dependent Custodies, 1 Federation, 20 Foundations, 14 Conferences of Ministers Provincial, and 3 Unions of Conferences in Asia/Oceania (FCAO), Latin America (UCLAF), and Europe (UFME). Although the total number is not included here; nevertheless, it can be a favorable occasion "to take time out along the way to discern where we are, where we are going, where the Spirit is driving us, and where it is we want to go" (*Starting Afresh From the Gospel*, p. 9).

## Agenda of the Minister General

- ▶ **02-07 May:** Participation in the Congress of Franciscan Educators (Mexico).
- ▶ **08 May:** Feast of Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces (Rome).
- ▶ **10-14 May:** Meeting of the General Definitory.
- ▶ **15 May:** Meeting of the Minister General and Definitory with the Province of St. Bonaventure and the Franciscan Family in Turin.
- ▶ **17-21 May:** Meeting with the Presidents of the Conferences of the Order (Rome).
- ▶ **21-23 May:** Visit to the Provinces of St. Steven the King (Transylvania - Romania).
- ▶ **25 May:** Meeting with the Italian Poor Clare Sisters (Assisi)

## Mines, Miners, and Missionaries



**T**he Carbon mines in Belgium as well as in other countries were an important industry that made regions, society, and families prosperous. Yet, the price paid by the miners was higher. The work done in the wells and the Carbon Galleries required courage, abnegation, and solidarity. The lives of miners were often compromised by serious accidents, catastrophe, and grave illnesses. These miners were mostly foreigners. After World War II, many Italian miners went to Belgium, for example, and were accompanied by priests and religious missionaries who were ready on the spot to assist in times of suffering. Among these religious were many Friars Minor. One of them was Br. Nicola Jachini, who is still living among the remaining families; he has organized an exhibition on the life of miners in Belgium displayed in the Hall of Emile La Croix at the Town Hall of Sambreville (27 April - 2 May 2010).

The goal of this exhibition is to remember the courage of all the miners who either lost their lives or

who, today, suffer serious diseases contracted from mines. The exhibition will include materials and tools used by miners, such as lamps, pick-axes, helmets, etc. as well as 15 big posters that evoke mines with all its dangers and risks. Some of the photos of miners will serve to personalize the event, especially the catastrophe of Marcinelle of 1956, thus raising awareness of the risk that miners run in these mines and the suffering it causes to their families. The exhibition is organized by the Center for Intercultural Animation of Southern Sambreville (CAIBS), supported by the local civil institutions and promoted by the Italian Catholic Mission.



## Franciscan International Publishers Association (EFRA)

**T**his association was born in 1995 and is made up of 10 Franciscan Publishing houses. Almost all of them belong to the OFM; its goal is getting to know each other, collaboration, the exchange of publications, and financial support for struggling houses. Furthermore, this Association comes together every two years to assess its editorial aspect, its publications, and to organize common tasks to be published in different languages. Besides its usual work, for some years now, the Association has also assumed the task of making up for the "cultural gaps" present in the Order. This gave rise to groups of research supported by publishing houses with highly scientific publications in the field of Franciscan studies. With the approval of new statutes by the new Administration of the Order on March 13, 2009, the Franciscan International Publishers Association wants the loyalty of all the publishing houses and/or publishing Entities belonging to our Order, the Franciscan Orders, and Franciscan movement. To this effect, we invite you to contact us by e-mail at [efra@ofm.org](mailto:efra@ofm.org) and in this way begin to establish a relationship and publishing collaboration.

## Union of all Franciscan Families of Italy

**O**ne year after the International Chapter of Mats celebrated in Assisi from April 15-18, 2009, the Conferences of Provincial Ministers OFM, OFM Conv, and OFM Cap, came together once again in Assisi to gather "the inheritance of the Centenary, i.e., to evangelize in history with St. Francis." This XXXIV General Assembly continued a tradition of annual interfranciscan meetings that characterizes Italian Franciscanism. The Provincial Minister was helped to rediscover and live the inheritance of

the Centenary through a reflection by Br. Giacomo Bini and three experiences of new evangelization present in each of the three Franciscan family. The Assembly also approved some common initiatives, such as the Common Italian Franciscan calendar, the publication of a "*Collectio Franciscana Missarum*", the preparation of the Italian Franciscan Missal, the publication of volume IV of Franciscan mystics, and putting together in three CDs all the Franciscan Musical Tradition from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the present, entitled, "the Se-

raphic Song."

Then each Conference of Provincial Ministers discussed about and reflected on each of its respective internal problems. The Conference of Provincial Ministers of Friars Minor of Italy (aka COMPI), for example, studied in depth the commitments taken up by the UFME Assembly of Brussels (February 2010), approved the Statutes for parish ministry and the Conference of SFO Assistants of Italy; they, likewise, examined the situation of the Missionary Foundation in Congo (Brazzaville) and prepared the meeting with the General Definitory to be held in June.

## Italy - The Palm of Peace in Memory of Father Allegra

**O**n March 28, some Associations of the city of Pozzallo, Sicily, together with the civil society and the ecclesial community, granted to the memory of the Ven. Br. Gabriele Allegra the honor of the "Palm of Peace" on behalf of Giorgio La Pira, originally from Sicily, but currently the mayor of Florence. We read in the certificate that the award was granted to this "Franciscan missionary, who was 'passionate for the Word of God' and untiring and inspirational in his research, especially within the Chinese context in which he lived." Three other people in addition to Br. Allegra were also granted the award for their witness in the areas of solidarity and religious values. The award is made up of a plaque of acknowledgement, a

certificate, a miniature silver statue of the Sorrowful Mother venerated in both Pozzallo and Portosalvo as Mother of *the sufferings and sorrows of the world*. The award to Br. Allegra was granted to the Order of Friars Minor and was received by Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli on behalf of the Minister General; it was later



brought to the General Curia in Rome.



### Franciscan Bookmark

► **Il p. Fedele da Fanna dei frati minori 1838-1881**, Vittorino Meneghin O.F.M., Edizione Porziuncola, Assisi 2009, p. 271.

This book reveals a section of the cultural history of the Franciscans of the 1800s and has a lot to teach us today. The figure of Fedele reminds us of the importance of study with rigorous and austere commitment to scientific research without shortcuts or compromises. Fedele is held up as an example of values which unfortunately today are often disregarded in our service to God and society whether intellectually or manually.

The reconstruction of the facts of how the great critical edition emerged in the 1800s shows how a history of institutions, of doctrinal undertakings, of practical and methodological study between St. Francis' time and today must be restored. The reason being is that they are a patrimony of the history of the Order that must be carefully taken into consideration.

► **Naar het land van de levenden. Regel van Franciscus van Assisi voor de minderbroeders** (*In the Land of the Living rule of Francis of Assisi for the Friars Minor*), Sigismund Verheij, Valkhof Pers, Nijmegen 2009, p. 207.

The great contribution made by Sigismund Verheij is that having freed the Rule from being interpreted as a series of devotional texts without anything original of the Charism of St. Francis to a generic doctrine of Christian perfection. By studying the Franciscan sources, he discovered the original Gospel style of life of St. Francis and his companions. Sigismund Verheij shows, moreover, the actual place that Francis and his brothers had chosen for themselves in both the Church and Society. In fact, the saint started to look at society in a new way when he left "the place" of his father and began to seek instead the place of the lepers in Assisi. The latter place was actually the turning point of Francis' conversion. The whole of the Rule can be understood in light of this fundamental option by St. Francis for the vulnerable and needy. Both he and his companions no longer wish to belong to a society where people fight to keep and increase their power, to lord it over others, and secure their own interests. Hence, they renounced political, economical, ecclesiastical, and military power and its lopsided system of values whose irrelevance is underscored before God, who alone is Almighty.

### New Ministers Provincial

► **Br. Francesco Bravi** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Charles Borromeo in Lombardy in Italy.

► **Br. Antonio Scabio** was elected Minister Provincial of the Venetian Province of St. Anthony in Italy.

► **Br. Stane Zore** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of the Holy Cross in Slovenia.

► **Br. José Antonio Castiñeira Chouza** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St. James of Compostela in Spain.

► **Br. José Antonio Jordá Tomás** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, Husband of the BVM, in Spain.

► **Br. Reinald Van Laer** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, Husband of the BVM, in Belgium.

### New Visitors General

► **Br. Dominic Vincent Monti**, of the Province of the Holy Name Jesus in the USA, was appointed Visitor General to the Province of the Assumption of the BVM in the USA.

► **Br. Manuel Anaut Espinosa**, of the Province of the Holy Gospel in Mexico, was nominated Visitor General to the Province of the Three Companions in France-Belgium.

## Bearers of the Gift of the Gospel



Mission *inter gentes* finds its full expression and, in a certain sense, its fulfilment, in mission *ad gentes*. On many occasions the Chapter has expressed its sincere appreciation for this mission, and has underlined the importance of this essential feature of all evangelization. Mission *ad gentes*, in fact, points out in a unique way the first moment of faith, born from the proclamation of the *kerygma* to those who do not yet know the Gospel and which calls for conversion. Through faith proclaimed and shared, the Spirit creates bonds of communion from which the Church is born. This missionary dynamic pertains essentially to the physiognomy of the Church, obedient to the command of Jesus who says, "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (n. 18).

### Great and Small News

► **Rome –The New Commission of Service for Dialogue has been appointed:** Within the Secretariat for Missions and Evangelization, the Minister General and General Definitory appointed the commission of service for dialogue made up of the following members: Br. Roger Marchal (President), Br. Nestor I. Schwerz (Vice-President), Br. Roberto Giraldo (Secretary), Br. Alvaro Cepeda, Br. Frederic Manns, Br. Pascal Robert, Br. Silvester Shim, Br. Massimo Tedoldi, Br. Philippe Yates, and Br. Ruben Tierrablanca.

During the first meeting held from March 20-21 of this year, the goal of the commission was laid out, namely, to animate both *ad intra* and *ad extra* the service for dialogue in all its three dimensions: ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural (General Chapter, *Mandate* 28). Various initiatives, such as meetings and dialogue were planned with representatives of different Christian confessions, religions, and cultures. Additionally, some meetings for peace, coexistence, mutual respect, and the safeguard of creation will also be organized in order to promote "Service for Dialogue" in the Entities of the Order. The commission decided, furthermore, to translate into several languages the 4 handbooks prepared by the previous six-year term on dialogue, so that they can be more known and disseminated.

► **Visit to Albania:** From March 20-25, the Minister General with the Definitory General for COMPI visited the Friars in Albania and others who are at the service of Albanian Catholics in the big parishes of both Tuz, Montenegro, and Gjakovë, Kosovo. The Minister made time to visit the Friars as a fraternity in their Friaries, as a General Assembly gathered in a hall, and individually by

request. Quite moving was the Eucharistic celebration at the Shrine of St. Anthony of Laç located not far from Tirana. Although nestled in an isolated mountain, it is, nonetheless, very much visited by scores of people, including non-Catholics. Today, the shrine has become a spiritual center in Albania. About 2,000 people, both Catholics and Muslims, from all over participated at the Mass of the General in the square in front of the shrine; its website is

<http://zanishenndou.org/>

During his visit, the Minister General also met with the Poor Clares in Scrutari and the Franciscan sisters of various congregations in Albania; he also attended both a theatrical performance and concert in Scrutari both organized in his honor. The last day of his visit on March 25 saw the celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation of the B.V. Mary, Patroness of the Province. Present at this celebration was the Apostolic Nuncio, two Bishops, Franciscan sisters, all the Friars of the Province, and many people. Although it is a small Entity, the Franciscan Province of Albania is, nevertheless, the most numerous and important religious presence in that country thanks to their uninterrupted faithful service to the people and their numerous martyrs.

► **Masters in Formation – A Franciscan Perspective:** Responding to the demands of the Franciscan family for the renewal of formation, The Franciscan Institute of Spirituality of the Pontifical *Antonianum* University proposes a Masters in Franciscan Formation in Italian, and beginning this year in 2010, it will also be in English. The goal of this formation for Formators is to offer them theoretic and practical knowledge of principals and dynamics of the process of formation, with special emphasis on Franciscan Anthropology. **For further information on the cost, schedule, and the description of course, ac-**

cess their website at

<http://www.antonianum.eu/>

► **VIII Convention of Greccio, Italy, from May 7-8, 2010 – Oasis Baby Jesus Greccio, Rieti:** The theme of the Convention is *The Franciscans and the Use of Money*. By taking a historical look from the Franciscan origins, this Convention tackles the appropriate use of earthly goods in the teachings of the Gospel. This reflection is at the base of and an incentive to the many political economic theories that have proliferated in western history with the goal of attaining collective wellbeing. Among the most problematic issues to be examined in these presentations is the growing conditioning of economy on personal and collective decisions; the ever growing need for ethical rules on the market so as not to generate injustices and inequalities; the use of money amid degrading misery and unprecedented riches; and the legitimization of profit and social reinvestment. For more information, go to [frate.francesco@iol.it](mailto:frate.francesco@iol.it); [www.centroculturalearacoeli.it/](http://www.centroculturalearacoeli.it/)

► **Washington:** On April 12, 2010, the government of the United States announced the appointment of Br. Daniel Sulmasy, a Franciscan Medical Doctor of the Holy Name of Jesus Province (USA), as member of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues; it is a new organization for the studies on bioethics willed for by Barack Obama and which replaces George Bush's former Council on Bioethics of 2001. Br. Daniel joins 9 other members in this Commission; he is 54 years old and is professor of medicine and ethics at the University of Chicago and Associate director at the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. He had previously been Director at the Bioethics Institute of New York Medical College and Center for Clinical Bioethics of Georgetown University in Washington.

► **The International Franciscan Award:** On April 9, 2010, Br. Dionysius Mintoff of the Province of St. Paul Apostle in Malta received the International Franciscan Award for his work on Justice at the United Nations. At 82 years old, Br. Dionysius now works with refugees at the Center Peace Laboratory blessed by Pope John XXIII in Malta.

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