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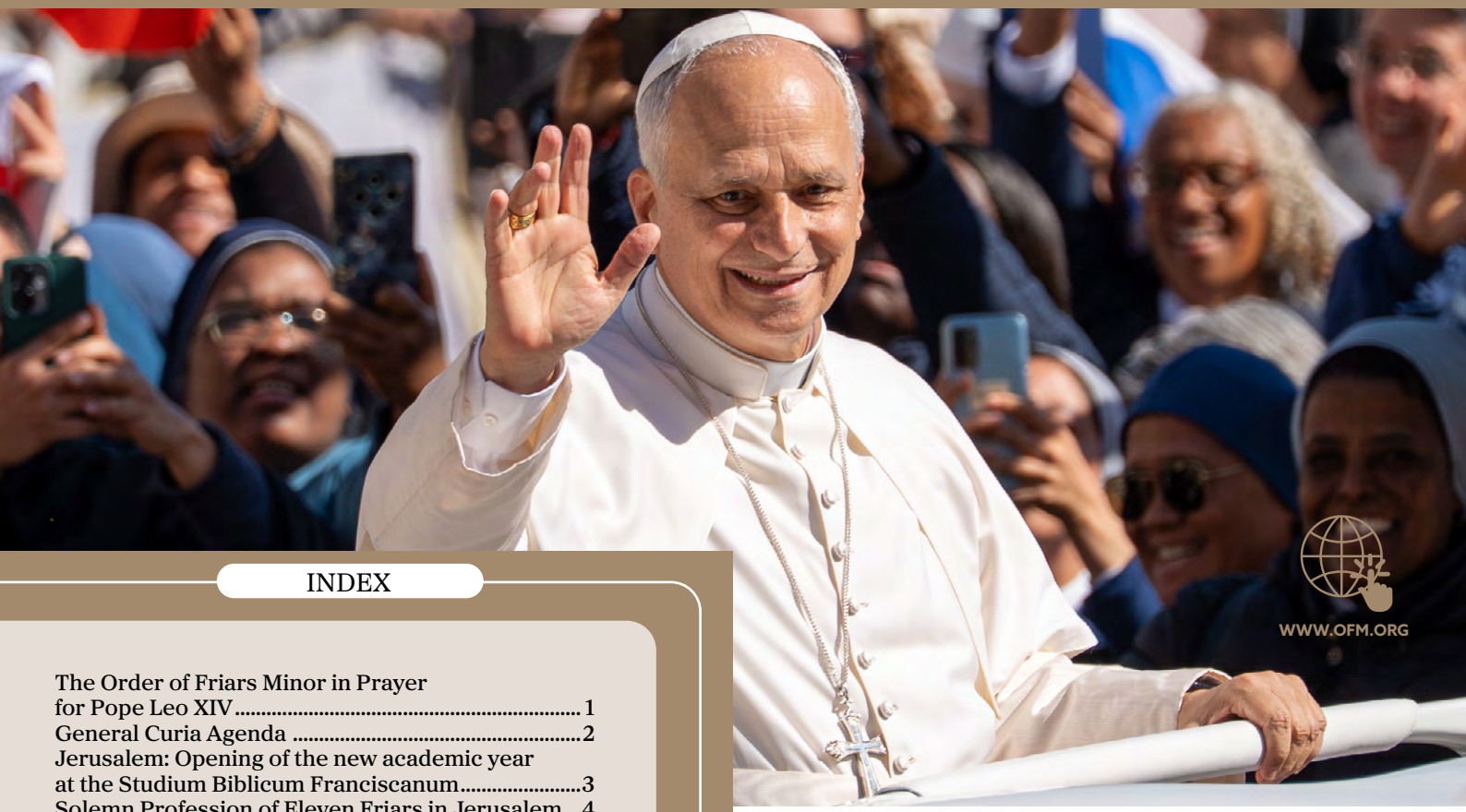

INDEX

The Order of Friars Minor in Prayer for Pope Leo XIV 1
General Curia Agenda 2
Jerusalem: Opening of the new academic year at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 3
Solemn Profession of Eleven Friars in Jerusalem ... 4
Catatumbo, Colombia: universal fraternity unites in prayer for Luis Vero 5
The Minister General meets the friars living and working in Sweden 5
VIII Centenary of the Transit St. Francis in the OFM World 6
Philippines 7
Democratic Republic of the Cong 9
India 9
Slovenia 10
Mozambique 11
Singapore 12
Rome 14
Life in the Order 15
Tempo Forte 15
Assembly of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia 16
Inter-obediential meeting on Missionary Evangelisation 17
Meeting of the JPIC Animation Committee 18
Meeting of those responsible for Formation from the Provinces of Slovakia and Czech Republic 19
Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Zapopan 20
PUA, series of conferences: "The spirit of Assisi between memory and prophecy" 21
Franciscan Bookmark 21
Celebrations marking 70 years of the Franciscan presence in Togo and 25 years of the Province of the Incarnate Word 22
Formation for the formators of the Africa Francophone Conference 23
Msgr. Vittorio Francesco Viola, OFM, appointed Vicar General for Vatican City 24

The Order of Friars Minor in Prayer for Pope Leo XIV

The Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, sent a letter on the 12 October 2026, to Pope Leo XIV, expressing, also on behalf of the entire Order, the filial closeness of the Friars Minor and their most sincere wishes for his swift and full recovery. During the solemn Eucharistic celebration at the Holy Sepulchre on the morning of 12 Octo-

ber, the Minister General, the General Definitory, the Custos of the Holy Land and his Discretorium, together with many friars, faithful and pilgrims, prayed for this intention. In his letter, the Minister General assured the Holy Father of his prayers and those of his brothers, entrusting his person and his ministry in the service of the universal Church to the Risen Lord. The Minister General invites all Friars Minor to join in prayer for the Holy Father, asking the Lord to grant him health, strength and serenity, and entrusting him to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Francis of Assisi.

General Curia Agenda

☑ Until the 22nd of October 2026, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the Definitor General, Br. Joaquin Echeverry, is visiting the Province of Saints Peter and Paul, in Mexico. From the 23rd to the 28th, they will again visit the Province of San Junípero Serra in Mexico. On the 30th and 31st, Br. Massimo will meet in Puglia (Italy) with the Definitors of the Provinces of St. Michael the Archangel and of the Assumption of the BVM. On the 1st of November, he will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints at the Shrine of Santa Maria della Vetrana in Castellana Grotte (BA – Italy).

☑ From the 28th of October to the 1st of November 1, Br. Joaquin will meet with the Definitory of the Province of St. Philip of Jesus (Mexico).

☑ From the 18th of October till the 24th, Br. Jimmy Zammit (Definitor General), Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas (Secretary General for Missions and Evangelisation), and Br. Dennis Tayo (General Animator for the Missions) are participating in the meeting of the Provincial Ministers and Secretaries for Missions and Evangelisation of the English-speaking Conference (ESC) and the Conference of Our Lady of Guadalupe of Central America in Washington, USA.

☑ From the 18th to the 22nd of October in Bogotá, Colombia, the General Definitor Br. César Külkamp will participate, together with Br. Darko Tepert and Br. Edson Nathuve (respectively, Secretary General and Vice of the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies), in the meeting of the Secretaries for Formation and Studies of the Americas. On the 23rd and 24th, he will meet with the formators of the Province of St. Paul the Apostle (Colombia); from the 25th to the 29th, he will visit the Custody of the Immaculate Conception of Venezuela; on the 30th and 31st, he will meet in Bogotá with the Definitory of the Province of St. Paul the Apostle. From the 1st to the 4th of November, he will participate in the Extraordinary Assembly of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia).

☑ From 21 to 27 October, Br. John Wong, Definitor General, will visit the Province of the Most Holy Martyrs of Korea (South Korea); from the 28th of October till the 4th of November, he will visit the Province of St. Francis Herald of Peace (Papua New Guinea).

☑ From the 25th till the 30th of October, Br. Franciso and Br. Dennis will participate in the European meeting on New Forms of Presence, Life and Evangelisation in Prague (Czech Republic). From the 2nd till the 7th of November, they will participate in the meeting of the Friars Artists to be held in the General Curia.

☑ From the 25th to the 30th of October, Br. Albert Schmucki will be in Salzburg (Austria) for the Ministers of the Transalpine Conference (COTAF) meeting.

☑ On the 26th and 27th of October, the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, will participate in the Assembly of the Conference of North Africa and the Middle East (CONAMO) in Cairo (Egypt).

☑ From the 28th to the 1st of November, Br. Jimmy will be in Savannah (Georgia, USA) for the beatification of the Martyrs of Georgia. Br. Gianni Califano, Postulator General and Postulator of the cause, will also be present. On this occasion, Br. Jimmy will visit some fraternities of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)

Government of the Order

Jerusalem: Opening of the new academic year at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum

Learning to love through the Holy Scriptures

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It was a special day for the students of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* (SBF) and the *Studium Theologicum Hierosolymitanum* (STH). On Monday the 5th October, the academic community of the two institutes officially marked the start of the 2026–2027 academic year with a solemn Mass in the Church of St Saviour in Jerusalem.

Both academic institutions boast a history and a mission of great significance. The *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, founded in 1924 and linked to the Custody of the Holy Land, is an international centre of excellence for archaeological research and the scientific study of the Bible, carried out in the very places where the Scriptures originated.

For its part, the *Studium Theologicum Hierosolymitanum,* established as a centre for theological formation for religious in the region, combines theological reflection with the daily reality of the Holy Places and a commitment to interreligious dialogue in Jerusalem. Together, these institutions carry forward the Franciscan tradition by uniting faith, rigorous study, and evangelical witness.

The celebration, presided over by Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, currently visiting the Holy Land, opened with a message from Br. Matteo Munari, Dean of the SBF, who thanked the Minister General for his presence and reminded students and lecturers that theological study and reflection are not ends in themselves, but are aimed at a better understanding of the Lord's message, so that it may be witnessed to and spread in an ever deeper and more effective way.

During his homily, Br. Massimo encouraged students and lecturers to view study not merely as learning, but as a journey of shared inquiry and fraternity. Drawing inspiration from the day's readings and beginning with the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Minister recalled that studying the Word of God in Jerusalem requires even greater compassion for those in the Holy Land who suffer and whose daily lives are marked by violence and hatred. Br. Massimo Fusarelli acknowledged the difficulties of studying the Holy Scriptures in this land, tormented by divisions and wounds, and thanked the friars of the Custody for deciding to remain and safeguard the places where the Lord lived.

The ceremony concluded with words of encouragement and a blessing from Br. Ulise Zarza, Custodial Vicar, Professor, and Secretary for Formation and Studies, addressed to the lecturers and students.

Riccardo Curti, Communications Office of the Custody of the Holy Land

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Read the homily by Br. Massimo Fusarelli

Solemn Profession of Eleven Friars in Jerusalem

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself"

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On the 11th October, 2026, in Jerusalem, eleven Franciscan friars from various nations made their solemn profession into the hands of Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor.

Members of the General Definitory were present at the liturgy, as were the Custos, Br.Francesco Ielpo, and fellow friars of the Custody of the Holy Land. Four of the newly professed friars belong to the Custody, while the others are in the Holy Land for studies but belong to foreign Provinces of the Order. Specifically, four come from the Province of St Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, one from the Province of St Benedict the African, and two from the Province of St Clare of Assisi in Mozambique.

During the rite, after reciting the formula in their own languages, the friars prostrated themselves on the ground during the Litany of the Saints, signed the official document on the altar, and received the fraternal embrace of the community. With this definitive commitment, the friars become permanent members of the Order, promising to live in obedience, poverty, and chastity according to the Franciscan Rule. In his homily, Br.Massimo Fusarelli urged the young friars to entrust themselves to Christ and to be ready to give their lives for the sake of the Gospel, supported by the closeness of the universal Church. Furthermore, the Minister General reminded the professed friars that their mission stems directly from the original mission of Saint Francis: to continue repairing their own hearts and lives in order to better welcome the Lord and spread His message, thereby helping to build up and strengthen His Church. Finally, Br.Fusarelli cautioned the young friars against thinking they had reached the end of their journey. "Even with Solemn Profession, we risk keeping 'me' at the centre, me with my needs, me with my ideas, me with my plans. That is not how the temple is repaired. My life is the temple of God, which is the world, which is the Church." Therefore, each person must step more to the side, to the margins, rather than always remaining at the centre. The celebrant concluded by addressing those making their profession: "We must say: 'Lord, I step aside; You are at the centre.'"

Riccardo Curti, Communications Office of the Custody of the Holy Land

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Read the homily by the Minister General

Catatumbo, Colombia: universal fraternity unites in prayer for Luis Vero

Press release

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On the 9th of October, explosive devices launched by drones hit the parish Church of San Martín de Porres, in Luis Vero (Diocese of Tibú), cared for by the Friars Minor of the Province of St. Paul the Apostle. Thank God there were no injuries, although the church suffered serious damage. The Catatumbo region has been experiencing a situation of violence for months that mainly affects peasant families. From Rome, the Minister General and his Definitory join in prayer for the friars and for all these people.

The entire Order expresses its solidarity with the community and the Church of Tibú and invites them to ask for the gift of peace for this land.

The Minister General meets the friars living and working in Sweden

Stockholm, 28–30 September 2026

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The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the Definitor General Br. Konrad Cholewa, met in Stockholm with friars of the Province of St. Francis in Poznań (Poland) who live and work outside their Province. Among them are the brothers from the two communities in Sweden, as well as those serving in Austria, Switzerland and Italy. The meeting takes place every year and offers these friars an opportunity for fraternity and ongoing formation. Over the course of two days, the brothers shared their experiences and reflected on what it means to be missionaries in a country where Catholics are a small minority. They also met the Christian community they serve, which is made up of people from at least 20 different nationalities. It is a vibrant and diverse community, expressing the richness of differences that make the Church truly catholic, that is, universal. Together with the Bishop of Stockholm, Cardinal Anders Arborelius, and many faithful, they celebrated the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis.

The programme also included a visit to Stockholm, to the first Franciscan church in the capital, where the Friars Minor arrived in 1229, and to the historic church in Arboga. The Friars Minor founded the latter in 1285 and cared for it until the Protestant Reformation of 1527. Following the Reformation, the flourishing Franciscan presence in the Scandinavian countries quickly came to an end. Its medieval frescoes depicting the life of Francis still make the church a place of remembrance today.

The Lutheran Church of Sweden is also commemorating the Centenary of the Transitus here: a sign of communion around the figure of Francis, who is recognised beyond confessional boundaries.

VIII CENTENARY OF THE TRANSIT

ST. FRANCIS IN THE OFM WORLD

1226 — 2026

Franciscus

Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of St. Francis

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Philippines

Manila

Around 3,700 registered participants and volunteers from across the Philippines gathered at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Quadricentennial Pavilion on Oct. 3 for the National Transitus Celebration, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi.

The daylong gathering brought together members of the Franciscan Family, bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, young people, lay faithful and friends of the Franciscan tradition under the theme, "800 Years of the Easter of Saint Francis of Assisi: Sowing Peace, Healing Creation, and Embracing the Poor."

The celebration was organized by the Inter-Franciscan Ministers Conference of the Philippines (IFMCP) in partnership with RCAM-MAGPAS, through the Office for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (OPNE), with the University of Santo Tomas hosting the national gathering.

The event formed part of the worldwide observance of the eighth centenary of the death, or Transitus, of St. Francis in 1226, inviting the Church not only to remember the Poor Man of Assisi but also to rediscover the continuing relevance of his Gospel witness.

Welcoming participants to UST, Br. Filemon I. Dela Cruz Jr., O.P., Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines, expressed the joy of the Dominican community in hosting the national celebration.

His welcome underscored the longstanding fraternity between the Dominican and Franciscan families, two religious traditions that emerged in the Church during the same historical period and have shared in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel for more than eight centuries.

The presence of thousands of Franciscans and friends of St. Francis at the Dominican-run university gave visible expression to that fraternity and to the wider ecclesial character of the celebration.

Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., Master of the Order of Preachers, had also expressed his joy upon learning that UST would host the national Franciscan gathering.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Cardinal Jose F. Advincula, Archbishop of Manila, who reflected on the evangelical poverty embodied by St. Francis.

Recalling how Francis left behind privilege and possessions in order to follow Christ and live in solidarity with the poor, the Cardinal said that true wealth is found in "a heart free enough to give."

His reflection invited the faithful to understand poverty not simply as the absence of material possessions, but as an interior freedom that enables Christians to become more available to God, to others, and especially to those on the margins.

The Cardinal's message brought the witness of the 13th-century saint into the realities of the present, challenging Christians to ask not only what they possess, but what may possess their hearts. In his keynote address, Bishop Jose Elmer Mangalinao of Bayombong, a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, invited participants to understand the Transitus not simply

as the historical death of St. Francis but as a pattern for Christian life. "The Christian life is a continual passage," the bishop said. He described Francis' journey as one of continuing conversion – from self to God, from possession to freedom, from division to fraternity, and ultimately from death to eternal life. "Every act of forgiveness when you want to hold a grudge is a transitus," Bishop Mangalinao said, reminding participants that the passage celebrated in Francis must also take place in the daily choices of every Christian.

Another highlight of the gathering was "Echoes of Assisi," a dialogue exploring how the life and spirituality of St. Francis continue to speak to the Church and society today.

Representatives of different expressions of the Franciscan family reflected on the relevance of Franciscan spirituality amid poverty and exclusion, conflict and social division, ecological destruction, and the search of young people for meaning and authentic community.

The gathering also provided opportunities for participants to reflect and share how the Franciscan call to peace, fraternity, care for creation and solidarity with the poor could be translated into concrete action in their own communities.

Young people took an active role throughout the celebration, including through animation led by the Inter-Franciscan Commission on Youth, highlighting the transmission of the Franciscan charism to a new generation.

The afternoon featured "*Poverello: Ang Dukha ng Assisi*," a theatrical presentation depicting the life, conversion and Gospel journey of St. Francis. The production took on particular significance following the death of its director, Jonathan Oraño, while preparations for the play were still underway. His passing added a poignant dimension to a gathering centered on the meaning of Transitus – the passage from earthly life to eternal life. The production became both a retelling of Francis' journey and a remembrance of an artist who had offered his talents in bringing the saint's story to the stage.

The gathering concluded with a liturgy led by Br. Lino Gregorio V. Redoblado, OFM, Chair of the Inter-Franciscan Ministers Conference of the Philippines and Minister Provincial of the Franciscan Province of San Pedro Bautista.

The 2026 commemoration concludes the series of Franciscan Centenaries recalling significant events in the final years of St. Francis' life: the Rule and Christmas at Greccio, the Stigmata, the Canticle of the Creatures, and his Transitus in 1226.

The presence of some 3,700 registered participants and volunteers reflected the continuing influence of the spirituality of St. Francis in the Philippine Church eight centuries after his death.

The National Transitus was made possible through the collaboration of the different branches of the Franciscan family, RCAM-MAGPAS through the Office for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (OPNE), the University of Santo Tomas, and various Church, media and mission partners.

Against the backdrop of conflict, poverty, social division and ecological degradation, the celebration called Christians to move beyond simply remembering St. Francis and to translate his Gospel witness into concrete action.

The National Transitus concluded with the challenge expressed in its theme: to sow peace, heal creation and embrace the poor.

Eight hundred years after the death of the Poor Man of Assisi, the gathering in Manila became not only an act of remembrance, but a renewed call to live the Gospel of fraternity, peace and care for creation in the realities of the present day.

By Franciscan Communications Philippines

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Democratic Republic of the Cong

On October 4, 2026, the Franciscan Family of the Province of Santa Maria degli Angeli in the Democratic Republic of Congo gathered in an atmosphere of deep fraternity and spiritual joy at the Monastery of the Poor Clares in Mamu wa Bupole, to solemnly celebrate the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. This important event saw the participation of approximately 250 people representing all branches, institutes, and movements of Franciscan spirituality active in the region. In preparation for this great celebration, the community participated, from October 1 to 3, in three days of intense teaching centered on the Canticle of the Creatures and the passage of the *Poverello* from earthly life to heavenly glory. These spiritual retreats were animated and guided with great theological precision by Br. Polydore Badibanga Kashala, OFM, Doctor in Theology with a specialization in Spirituality, whose contributions illuminated the spiritual depth of the Franciscan heritage.

The culminating moment of this meeting was the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Br. Nicodème Muambata Mukatsala, OFM, Provincial Minister. In a fervent and fraternal assembly, nine branches and members of the Franciscan Family together gave thanks: the Minor Brothers (OFM), the Poor Clares, the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS), the Trinitarian Franciscan Brothers, the Franciscan Stigmatine Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Spirit, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Gospel and of Development, the Franciscan Youth (YuFra), the Franciscan Missionary Brothers of the Gospel and of Development.

The day was concluded in a spirit of fraternity, sharing and renewal of the common commitment to witness the Gospel, in the example of Saint Francis, within the Church and Congolese society.

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India

Bengaluru

On the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi, a special exhibition on the life, spirituality and legacy of St. Francis was organised at St. Anthony's Church, Bengaluru, India, in the Franciscan Province of St. Thomas the Apostle. The exhibition was inaugurated on 3 October 2026 by the Minister Provincial, Br. Xavier Durairaj, along with the Parish Priest, Br. Sleeva Reddy, and other religious superiors, in the presence of the friars and faithful parishioners. At the entrance of St. Anthony's Friary Church, visitors were welcomed by a life-size structure inspired by the original Porziuncola in Assisi, within which the body of St. Francis of Assisi was artistically represented. The exhibition presented the story of St. Francis through digital creativity, prepared by the parish youth group - Ferdinand, showing important moments of his life, his conversion, his call to follow Christ, his love for the poor, his fraternity and his deep relationship with creation.

A major attraction of the exhibition was the collection of large acrylic paintings by Br. Balu based on the five im-

portant Franciscan Jubilee themes: The Rule, The Nativity at Greccio, The Stigmata, The Canticle of Creatures and The Transitus. Along with these paintings, various ink wash drawings, charcoal drawings, other paintings and sculptural works were also displayed. Another special attraction was the New Jerusalem soap sculpture, which became the centre of attention in the gallery. Several smaller soap-carved sculptures were displayed alongside it, attracting the curiosity and appreciation of many visitors.

On 4 October 2026, after the Mass of the Solemnity, Most Rev. Peter Machado, Archbishop of Bengaluru, visited the exhibition. His visit was a special moment of encouragement for the friars and faithful. The exhibition was more than a display of artworks. It became a visual journey through the life and spirituality of St. Francis, bringing together faith, history, technology and contemporary art. It reminded visitors of the continuing relevance of Franciscan values, love for Christ, simplicity, fraternity, peace, care for the poor and love for creation. After 800 years, the legacy of St. Francis continues to inspire the Church and the world, allowing people to remember not only his Transitus, but also the living legacy that continues through the Franciscan family today across the world.

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Slovenia

19 days of walking

After 19 days of walking, on October 2, 2026, three pilgrims from Slovenia arrived joyfully at the place of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, at the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in the Portiuncula. It was precisely here that the *Poverello* of Assisi met Sister Death 800 years ago, in 1226.

On the occasion of this Jubilee, the pilgrims – the couple Marta and Miha Hribovšek, together with Br. Robert Bahčič, rector of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Brezje, in Slovenia – set off on foot from Slovenia to reach the Franciscan city. A sign of gratitude for 60 years of life, for the gift of Saint Francis and for the gift of being able to serve in the Order of Friars Minor and in the OFS.

On the second part of the journey, they especially revisited the path of Francis through various places, in which churches were built in honor of the saint or in memory of his visit. Wherever they stopped, they offered the

faithful images of Our Lady Help of Christians – Marija Pomagaj – and of Saint Francis. They were accompanied throughout the entire journey by prayer and contemplation. Prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for our Slovenian Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross, for the Order of the Friars Minor, for new spiritual vocations, for the perseverance of those who have already been called, for our beloved Slovenia and for peace in the world. On Friday, October 2 at 3:35 PM, the Minister General of the OFM, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, received them in front of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, who then accompanied them to the Porziuncola, imparted to them a blessing and gave them the Franciscan Tau.

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Mozambique *Chimoio*

Around 600 members of the Franciscan Family in Mozambique gathered in Chimoio on the 3rd and 4th October 2026 to celebrate the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi.

On the afternoon of the 3rd October, members of the Franciscan Family in Mozambique gathered at the Franciscan Seminary in Chimoio for a catechesis entitled 'The Testament and the Canticle of the Creatures: the spiritual legacy of Saint Francis today – paths to peace, reconciliation and social justice'. During the gathering, Br Sacala, OFMCap, urged participants to overcome conflict and care for 'Mother Earth', warning of the visible consequences of climate change affecting Mozambique and the whole world. He also emphasised that reconciliation must begin with each person who identifies as Franciscan today.

Br Evódio João, OFM, Minister Provincial of the Province of Saint Clare in Mozambique, followed with an address. He reflected on the Franciscan Jubilee Year, proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV as an invitation to follow the example of the Saint of Assisi, and encouraged the faithful to become models of holiness and witnesses to peace. To benefit fully from this time of grace, participants were invited to seek reconciliation through the Sacrament of Penance.

During the Mass, Br Lucas Gegema, OFMCap, Custos of the Capuchin Friars in Mo-

zambique, urged the Franciscans to mark an important milestone in the history of the Franciscan presence in Mozambique by working for unity and building a united Franciscan Family capable of living in fraternity, as St. Francis did. On Sunday, the 4th October, participants processed through the streets of Chimoio, carrying an image of St. Francis to the cathedral. Along the route, accompanied by the recitation of the Rosary and the singing of hymns, the procession paused so that the faithful could publicly exchange an embrace of peace. It then continued to the cathedral, where Mass was celebrated, and married couples renewed their marriage vows.

The Bishop of Chimoio, the Most Rev. Lúcio Andrice Muandula, presided over Mass in the cathedral and focused his homily on St. Francis's life. 'St. Francis's journey was one of listening to the Word of God, encountering Christ, contemplating the Cross of Christ and conforming himself to the Crucified One, who made him a brother to all creation,' the Bishop said. He concluded: 'St. Francis of Assisi, man of the Gospel and universal brother, pray for us. Amen.' After the homily, the entire Franciscan Family knelt before the Bishop and renewed its commitment to live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the celebration, those present received the Apostolic Blessing and returned to the seminary for a fraternal meal.

The celebrations for the Eighth Centenary of the Transitus of St Francis brought together in Chimoio the wider Franciscan Family from the country's central and northern regions. Those present included Friars Minor, Capuchin Friars, members of the Secular Franciscan Order and Franciscan Youth from the dioceses of Beira, Tete, Chimoio, Quelimane and Caia. The Brothers of Our Lady of Victories, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and the Friends of Mary Wilson also took part, together with numerous friends and supporters of Franciscan charism.

Leia as notícias em português

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Singapore

Friars, sisters and Secular Franciscans in Singapore gathered at the Church of St Mary of the Angels on the evening of October 3 to mark 800 years since the death of St Francis of Assisi, with prayer, an original play and testimonies from across the Franciscan Family.

The Transitus, the traditional Franciscan remembrance of Francis's passing on October 3, 1226, was held in the parish's main church under the theme "From God, through God, to God". The friars of the OFM Custody of St Anthony (Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei) described it as the culmination of the Franciscan Centenary, five celebrations over four years observed together by the Friars, Poor Clares, Franciscan sisters and Secular Franciscans.

The evening was built around the Testament that St Francis wrote near the end of his life. In a play staged beside a model of the Portiuncula, the small chapel near Assisi where he died, cast members re-enacted episodes from his life: his embrace of a leper, the call at San Damiano to rebuild the Church, the arrival of St Clare and the first brothers, his meeting with the Sultan during the Crusades, and his final days, when he welcomed death as a sister.

Between the scenes, members of the Franciscan Family spoke about how his example shapes their lives today.

A sister of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) described her congregation's care for people affected by leprosy, which she said it has run or supported in Japan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, India, Myanmar, Australia and the Philippines since the time of its founders in the 19th century.

Recalling her mission in Kakuma, Kenya, where she said people live in huts made of cardboard and rags and more than 300,000 refugees wait in the camp, she linked her experience to Francis's encounter with the leper.

"When we cross the boundaries of fear, discomfort, and indifference, we may really discover that the person we thought we were going to serve is actually the person who brings us closer to Jesus," she said.

A sister of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM) spoke of bringing Holy Communion to elderly people who are homebound or in rehabilitation.

She recalled a 92-year-old man she visits in hospital who, when she told him it was Sunday, said he had just been thinking of going to church. "While I may think I'm bringing Jesus to them, they are also bringing me back to Jesus," she said.

A postulant who has spent almost a year in the Franciscan postulancy programme described living in a fraternity of eight friars, some professed for many years and some just beginning. "The Lord calls, the Lord leads, and the good Lord provides," he said.

Reflecting on Francis's story of "perfect joy", Br. John Paul, speaking of his 43 years in fraternity, said community life can be a source of comfort and belonging but can also wound deeply. He urged the congregation to respond with peace rather than retaliation. "When fraternity wounds us, let us not give up on fraternity," he said.

Janet, a Secular Franciscan professed in 2007, said the Secular Franciscan Order, founded by St Francis in 1221, has more than 300,000 members worldwide and 50 to 60 in Singapore, 41 of them professed.

Unlike the friars and sisters, its members live in their own homes and work in their own workplaces. "It is not joining an organisation, but it is really God calling us to this way of life," she said.

The evening closed with the Canticle of the Creatures in song, the Gospel account of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, and the blessing of St Francis from his Testament.

The Franciscan Jubilee celebrations at St Mary of the Angels continue with "TO GAZE: St Clare of Assisi" on October 16 and 17 at 8.15pm in the Main Church.

By Benedict Tang

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Rome

General Curia

On the 4th October at 11.00 am, a Eucharist was celebrated at the Church of St Mary Mediatrix at the General Curia of the Order of Friars Minor on the Solemnity of St Francis of Assisi. Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, Master of the Order of Preachers, presided over the celebration, which friars, religious sisters from various congregations, members of the local Secular Franciscan Order (OFS), and the faithful attended.

The presence of the Master of the Order of Preachers forms part of the long-standing tradition of fraternity between the two mendicant Orders: on the feast of St Francis, the Dominicans are invited to preach in Franciscan churches, whilst on the feast of St Dominic, the Franciscans render the same service in Dominican churches. In his homily, Br. Gerard reflected on five gifts that St Francis continues to offer the Church. Drawing on the experience of San Damiano and the command addressed to the *Poverello* –The Poor Man of Assisi: 'Go and repair my house' – he emphasised how Francis began with what was concrete, repairing the small church with his own hands before grasping the broader scope of his calling.

The first gift highlighted was the witness that 'the Gospel can be lived': Francis allowed the Word to transform his life in a tangible way, making poverty a path of freedom and trust. The second concerned his fidelity to the Church: faced with a house in ruins, he chose neither to abandon it nor merely to issue orders, but instead 'entered among the ruins and picked up a stone', contributing to its reconstruction from within. The third gift was fraternity. Recalling that Francis affirms in his Testament that the Lord gave him brothers, Br. Gerard presented fraternity as the place where one learns to love even those whom one has not chosen. The fourth gift arose from Francis's encounter with Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in 1219: 'he crossed a border without a sword', bearing witness through his peaceful presence and recalling the commitment to an 'unarmed and disarming peace'.

Finally, the fifth gift concerned our relationship with creation. In the Canticle of the Creatures, the Master of the Order of Preachers recalled that the sun, the moon, the wind, water, fire and the earth are recognised as brothers and sisters, united with human beings in praise of the Creator.

Bringing these five gifts together, Br. Gerard invited those present not to think first and foremost of the whole edifice that needs to be rebuilt, but of the 'stone' that Christ places in each person's hands today: 'A brother to forgive. A poor person to see. A stranger to meet. A responsibility to take on. A corner of God's creation to receive with gratitude.' At the end of Mass, the participants shared a moment of fraternal fellowship with the faithful present at the celebration.

See the photos on Flickr

LIFE in the Order

Solemn professions

11 ottobre, Custodia di Terra Santa: **Br. Alain Abdel Nour, Br.Alvaro Milenio Batista Soares, Br.Antoine Mbamba Fumukasema, Br.Darlington Chidiogo Ifedioranma, Br.Emidio Milton Carlos Tovela, Br.Ezequiel Gaspar Manuel De Loca, Br.Fernando Enrique Rojas De Castro, Br.Fransiskus Gregorius P. Bataona, Br.John the Baptist Vinh Doan, Br.Pascoal Lemos Calicana, Br.Vincentius Gabriel Sitanggang.**

10th October, Prov. St. Francis of Quito (Ecuador): **Br.David (David Andrés) Cuenca Morocho, Br.Alex (Alex Fabricio) Florencio Yugla.**

10th October, Prov. Immaculate Conception BVM (USA): **Br.Kevin (Kevin Ottoniel) Hernández**

4th October, Prov. Our Lady of the Angels (Poland): **Br.Karol Skiera**

Ordinazioni Presbiterali

10th October, Prov. Our Lady of the Hungarians (Hungary): Br.Teofil (Ádám) Novák

Fratelli Defunti

† 7th October: Br.Bernard Raphael (William Joseph Raphael) Creighton, Prov. Our Lay of Guadalupe (USA)

† 4th October : Br.Hugh Francis (Charles Howard Francis) Hines, Prov. Our Lady di Guadalupe (USA)

† 3rd October: Br.Armando (Giuseppe) Cicchello, Prov. The Most Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)

Information received from the General Secretariat

Tempo Forte

The General Definitory's communiqué of the Tempo Forte for September 2026 has been published

Download PDF:
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Animation of the Order

Assembly of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia

Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia), 5-11 October 2026

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In Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, the assembly of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology of Asia was held from 5-11 October 2026. The event hosted by Br. Cosmas Francis OFM, the JPIC animator of Custody of St. Anthony (Singapore-Malaysia-Brunei), with the support of Franciscan Secular Order members from Kota Kinabalu-Malaysia. The assembly was attended by OFM JPIC animators from Asia, OFM-Cap JPIC Animators from Malaysia and Indonesia, Franciscan Religious Sisters from Sabah-Taiwan-Myanmar, Secular Franciscans, Professionals, Franciscans International, and the General Office for JPIC OFM in Rome.

Focusing on theme 'Natural Disaster Management', the participants began the meeting with a reflective question: *What can our Franciscan Network do to prevent environmental destruction and reduce disaster risk*? Presentations and insights from South Korea, Myanmar, West Papua and Flores Indonesia helped address this question alongside a deep discussion on a just energy transition led by *Franciscans International*. Later, they shared how local communities can strengthen their capacity to respond to environmental challenges. Examples included waste segregation in India, the Laudato Si' Stations of the Cross in Boolitikon Sabah-Malaysia, sustainable gardens in Taiwan, advocacy for the rights to a healthy environment.

Realizing that fostering deep human awareness and sensitivity to care for Mother Earth is fundamental, the attendees deepened their reflection on how human choices contribute to the environmental crisis. They examined human error and the need for ecological conversion by asking what changes are required in their personal, community, and institutional ways of life. To address this reflective question, they deeply shared insights on organic farming in Indonesia, prioritizing care for creation over development in the Philippines, limiting production and consumption, and the reasons why the Franciscan way of life remains relevant today.

The participants also discussed quick response strategies for vulnerable community effected by disaster before, during, and after an emergency. They explored several key areas of humanitarian aid including how to estA visit to the OFM fraternity in Ispica (Ragusa, Italy) blish an organized system and a well-prepared plan, collaborate with key actors and volunteers, and support affected communities through recovery, reconstruction, and resilience. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of transitioning wisely from merely providing assistance to fostering empowerment, ensuring that they support victims effectively without reinforcing a cycle of victim-

ization. Ultimately, the reflection revealed strong appreciation for the network as a space for fraternity, learning, sharing, and international collaboration. The central message underscored a collective desire to transform the relationships, knowledge, and inspiration gained during the assemblies into sustained collaboration and concrete action.

The event concluded with an exposure trip, which included a visit to the Kuyungon Community in Kampung Tambungan, Sabah-Malaysia, where residents are building self-sufficient community in the spirit of "Living in Harmony with Nature". The participants also visited the Mari-Mari Culture Village. where the people from Sabah preserve the forest and nature as a core part of their culture and identity.

Inter-obediential meeting on Missionary Evangelisation

A visit to the OFM fraternity in Ispica (Ragusa, Italy)

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On the 6th and 7th October, 2026, the Secretaries General for Missions and Evangelisation of the four Franciscan Orders—OFM, OFM Capuchin, OFM Conventual, and TOR—met at the Kolbe Spirituality Centre of the Friars Minor Conventual in Carini (Palermo), Sicily, to review their shared journey, specifically revisiting the latest report presented to the Ministers General during their recent meeting in Assisi. Preparations continued for the online inter-obediential course titled "Evangelising with Friars and Laypeople: Weaving the Charism Today," scheduled for the 17th, 18th and 19th November, 2026 (spanning three mornings), with translation provided in several languages. Work was also done on the upcoming Missionary Course to be held in Guwahati, Northeast India, from the 18th February to the 18th March, 2027; for both initiatives, details regarding participation, speakers, and the program schedule were further developed.

From the 18th to the 10th October, Br. Dennis Tayo, OFM, and Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas, OFM—respectively the General Animator and the Secretary General for Missions and Evangelisation—visited the OFM fraternity of Santa Maria di Gesù in Ispica, within the Sicilian Franciscan Province. This friary community, which holds no parish responsibilities, welcomes and accompanies numerous migrants arriving in Sicily, including those passing through the Catania area, in search of better living conditions.

Their presence is inspired by the welcome Jesus received in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and by the closeness of the Good Samaritan. Furthermore, the friars carry out their service with an itinerant spirit, valuing interculturality and building networks with Caritas and other organizations dedicated to supporting migrants and the most vulnerable families.

The visit was an occasion for a warm welcome and fraternal sharing, which also provided an opportunity to present the journey and initiatives of the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation, recognising this experience as a tangible sign of fraternity in mission.

Meeting of the JPIC Animation Committee

Rwanda, 26-29 September 2026

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Following the conclusion of the Continental Meeting of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) Animators of Africa, held in Rwanda, four members of the JPIC Animation Committee - Br. Daniel Blanco, Br. Taucen Girsang, Br. Jean Eric Mutabazi, and Sr. Mary Frances Wangare - met in person in Kivumu, Rwanda, from Saturday, 26 September, to Tuesday, 29 September 2026. The other two members of the Committee, Br. Cordian Szwarc and Mr. Tomás Insua, were unable to attend the meeting for personal reasons.

The main objective of the meeting which followed the methodology of "memory-discernment-looking ahead" was to gather the pastoral and documentary record of the 2026 JPIC Continental Meeting for Africa and identify its main fruits, challenges and commitments, to discern on the JPIC's contribution to the process of General Chapter OFM of May 2027 and to outline the Office's agenda for October 2026 - May 2027.

The meeting began on Saturday the 26th September, with a prayer for refugees and migrants led by Sr. Mary Francis, followed by an evaluation by all participants of the JPIC Continental Meeting for Africa which was concluded the previous day.

All the participants appreciated the way in which the meeting proceeded from the arrival of participants to its conclusion while acknowledging the failure of JPIC animators some Entities to attend. It was also realised it is difficult to assess the continuity and connection between various continental meetings due to the long period of six years between them.

On Monday, the 28th September, following the opening prayer for peace by Br. Taucen, the session focused on the process of preparation of the General Chapter OFM and the contribution of the General Office for JPIC to it. The Committee carefully discussed the articles of the General Statutes on JPIC so as to see if any amendments need to be suggested.

After this, the participants reviewed the state, the challenges and the proposals of each of the four Franciscan networks (the Americas, Mediterranean, Asia and Africa) and drafted the Office's proposals to the General Chapter.

The final day, Tuesday the 29th September, began with a prayer for creation led by Br. Jean Eric. During this session, the Committee finally drew the JPIC office's proposals to the General Chapter OFM 2027and outlined the JPIC office's agenda for October 2026 - May 2027. Special attention was paid to the organisation of the International JPIC Course with regard to its venue and cost.

The meeting concluded with two visits: a fraternal visit to the postulancy house where fifteen young men from Burundi and Rwanda live the Franciscan values with a lot of cheerfulness and enthusiasm; and a visit to the historical Minor Basilica of Kabgayi.

News from the Entities

Meeting of those responsible for Formation from the Provinces of Slovakia and Czech Republic

Bratislava, October 11–13, 2026

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From 11 to 13 October 2026, a fraternal meeting of those responsible for Formation and Studies in the Franciscan Provinces of Saint Wenceslas (Czech Republic) and Holy Saviour (Slovakia) was held in Bratislava (Czech Republic). The Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies took part, together with the formators involved in the various stages of initial and ongoing formation.

The meeting provided an opportunity to share the current situation of formation in the two Provinces, to discuss the different stages of the formation journey, and to reflect on possibilities for ever closer collaboration. Particular attention was given to the experience of the common postulancy, initial and ongoing formation, and the coordination of several shared formation initiatives.

The guest of the meeting was Br Sergiusz Bałdyga, OFM, Secretary for Formation and Studies of the North-Slavic Conference (SLAN), who presented a reflection entitled "Vocation Ministry, Formation and Mission: One Journey of Discernment." Inspired by the recent letters on formation by the Minister General and the General Secretary for Formation and Studies OFM, the presentation proposed looking at the vocational and formation journey through three Gospel dynamics: "Come and see" – "Remain" – "Go out two by two." Vocation ministry, formation and mission are not separate realities, but rather different stages of a single process of encountering Christ, discernment, growth in fraternity and missionary sending.

The friars also devoted time to sharing the experiences, challenges and perspectives of their respective Provinces, encouraging one another and seeking concrete forms of collaboration.

The meeting took place in a warm and fraternal atmosphere, enriched by the generous hospitality of the Franciscan fraternity in Bratislava, and provided a further opportunity to strengthen the bonds and the common journey between the friars of the two Provinces.

Přečtěte si článek v češtině

Prečítajte si článok v slovenčine

Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Zapopan

Guadalajara Church, Mexico – 12th October, 2026

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On the 12th of October, the Church of Guadalajara and the friars of the Franciscan Province of Saints Francis and James in Mexico celebrated the procession of the image of Our Lady of Zapopan, from the Cathedral of Guadalajara to its Basilica in Zapopan.

Over a million faithful participated in this splendid tradition, which in 2026 marked its 292nd anniversary, and in which we Franciscan friars welcome pilgrims and organise hospitality at the Mother House of the Province.

Friars from different fraternities of the Province joyfully participated in the procession, joining traditional dancers, pastoral groups of the archdiocese, members of consecrated life, diocesan seminarians, guards of honour of the Virgin and thousands of faithful who walked over nine kilometres. Upon arrival at the Basilica of Zapopan, the Minister Provincial, Br. Gabriel Martín Cardiel Ponce, OFM, and the Guardian of the Basilica, Br. Rodolfo Ramírez de la Torre, OFM, placed the sacred image on a platform for the celebration of the Eucharist. The Mass was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio to Mexico, Msgr. Joseph Spiteri; in his homily, he recalled the eighth centenary of St. Francis's death and prayed for peace and the good of all.

This pilgrimage reminded us that we live our faith by walking together and that honouring our Blessed Mother also means following her example: drawing closer to Christ and sowing peace and goodness amongst our brothers and sisters.

We thank God for allowing us to accompany the Patroness of our Province once again on her journey through the city of Guadalajara and for granting us the privilege of guarding her venerable image.

PUA, series of conferences: “The spirit of Assisi between memory and prophecy”

Pontifical University Antonianum

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On the 7th October the Chair of Spirituality and Interreligious Dialogue, dedicated to the memory of Mons. Luigi Padovese and promoted by the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University *Antonianum* (PUA), launched a series of conferences entitled “The spirit of Assisi between memory and prophecy”.

Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad, Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, hosted the first meeting and gave a talk entitled “The meeting of the 27th October, 1986 and the Magnifica Humanitas of Leo XIV.” In his speech, the cardinal recalled the prophetic significance of the Assisi meeting, emphasising how St. Francis’s witness continues to inspire interreligious dialogue and a commitment to peace. Linking that event’s legacy to the magisterium of Leo XIV, he highlighted the importance of fraternity as a foundation for building a future of peace, recalling Franciscan academic institutions’ responsibility to promote a culture of encounter and dialogue.

Read the full text of the report by Cardinal Koovakad.

See the calendar of upcoming conferences on the PUA website.

Franciscan Bookmark

Filosofia francescana.

Figure e temi tra XIII e XIV secolo

Fr. Ernesto Dezza, OFM

Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana

Celebrations marking 70 years of the Franciscan presence in Togo and 25 years of the Province of the Incarnate Word

Lomé, 1-4 October 2026

WWW.OFM.ORG

Moderated by Br. Nicodème Kolani, Provincial Minister of the Province of the Incarnate Word of West Africa, the jubilee festivities marking 70 years of Franciscan presence in Togo and the 25th anniversary of the Province began on October 1st with the triduum in preparation for the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. The jubilee brought together all the Franciscan friars of Togo and other countries of the Province and the entire Franciscan family to give thanks to the Lord for the 70 years since the Franciscan charism was established on this African soil.

A round-table discussion was organized for this purpose on October 2nd to trace the history of this missionary foundation. It was attended by over 100 people and it was graced by the presence of the Order's Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jimenez, representing the Minister General; Br. Siphelele Gwanisheni, Definitor General for Africa, and also Msgr. Victor Quematcha, former Definitor General for Africa and now Bishop of Bafatá in Guinea-Bissau.

For this occasion, he conferred priestly ordination upon three Friars from the Province of the Incarnate Word. The ceremony took place in a festive atmosphere, attended by more than 500 members of the faithful, the Franciscan family, and the families of the newly ordained Friars.

The highlight of the celebration was the solemn Mass presided over by Br. Ignacio Jimenez, on Sunday, October 4th, Solemnity of St. Francis of Assisi. The Vicar General urged Friars of the Province to faithfully steward the legacy left by the early Friars and to continue this mission with hope. Friars joyfully celebrated the jubilee Mass with songs and dances. A group photo and a festive meal marked the conclusion of the celebration.

Filled with gratitude for the first Friars who arrived in Togo, Friars look to the future of the Order in the country with great hope and optimism. The jubilee continues in northern Togo on October 9th to 10th, in Dapaong diocese established by Friars. The final closing event will take place in Ivory Coast, where Friars arrived in 1957.

Br. François Lare, OFM

Secretary for Formation and Studies

Formation for the formators of the Africa Francophone Conference

Lomé, September 20-29, 2026

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From September 20 to 29, 2026, a session of formation was held in Lomé, Togo, aimed at the formators of the Africa Francophone Conference. The meeting was attended by the Secretaries for Formation and Studies and the formators of the conference, coming from Togo, Congo-Brazzaville, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar.

Organized by the Secretary for Training and Studies of the Province of the Incarnated Word, the session brought together, in a fraternal atmosphere, those responsible for formation within the Conference of Francophone Africa. The meeting offered them the opportunity to reflect on the importance of cooperation among the various entities of Francophone Africa, to deepen the methods for making it concrete, and thus to contribute to a prophetic testimony in this part of the continent. The session, led by the Coordinator of the Secretariat for Formation and Studies of the Africa Francophone Conference, was opened by the Provincial Minister of the Province of the Incarnated Word and President of the Conference, Br. Nicodème Kolani, OFM. In his welcome speech, he presented to the participants the expectations of the Conference in the context of formation. During the proceedings, several topics were thoroughly explored: the role of spiritual accompaniment in formation, the prevention of abuse in formation houses, as well as the transparent development and management of projects. Particular attention was given to the collaboration between the various Francophone entities in the context of formation. The participants also recognized the need to promote interculturality in the spirit of the Order.

The informal moments fostered the sharing of experiences that generated hope in the context of formation and the discussion on the importance of the Franciscan year. Visits to some religious and cultural sites in the country and to the fraternities of the Province of the Incarnated Word also allowed participants to get to know more closely the cultural and spiritual riches of Togo and the formative structures of the Province.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration in honor of the saints, Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, concluded the session. The participants returned to their respective countries in a spirit of fraternity, expressing the hope that in the future other meetings of this type will be promoted for the formators.

Br. François Lare, OFM

Coordinator of the Secretariat for Formation and Studies of the Africa Francophone Conference

Holy See

Msgr. Vittorio Francesco Viola, OFM, appointed Vicar General for Vatican City

10th October, 2026

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On Saturday, the 10th October 2026, the Holy Father Leo XIV appointed our confrere, H.E. Msgr. Vittorio Francesco Viola, OFM—formerly Secretary of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments—as Vicar General of His Holiness for Vatican City, Archpriest of the Papal Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican, and President of the Fabric of Saint Peter.

We offer Msgr. Viola our warmest congratulations and best wishes for this new and important service to the Church. May his profound knowledge of the liturgy, which he has shared and borne witness to as a teacher and mystagogue, guiding others toward an understanding and living experience of the mystery being celebrated, along with his constant focus on the link between liturgy and charity, continue to inspire his service at St. Peter's Basilica, a place of profound significance for the faith and communion of the universal Church.

We pray that, in this new role, he may safeguard and enhance the beauty and dignity of the Vatican Basilica, ensuring it remains an ever-greater place of prayer, welcome, and encounter with the Lord for pilgrims arriving from every corner of the globe.

We accompany him with our fraternal prayers, entrusting his ministry to the intercession of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and of our Seraphic Father St. Francis.

Curia Generale dei Frati Minori
Via di S. Maria Mediatrice, 25
Roma, Italia

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OFM
Ordo Fratrum Minorum
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