



Peace is born of forgiveness

The Minister General to the pilgrims on the occasion of the "Porziuncola" penitential service

"How I rejoiced when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord" (Ps 122, 1). Overflowing joy was the feeling which animated the pilgrim who undertook the "going up" to Jerusalem, certain of finding in the Holy City that peace for which his heart yearned and that good for which he ardently longed.

We feel that same joy when we come to this holy place so loved by our Father Francis for he founded his Order here and, being few, the Lord multiplied them under the attentive gaze of the Queen of Angels. Here, in this place dedicated to the Mother of God and restored by the hands of the young Francis, "he was reborn and the state of life of Christ was revealed to him", that is, the Gospel. Here, as in no other place, the Lord showed His goodness and mercy to the "Poverello".

That peace and pardon which the pilgrim arriving in Jerusalem implored is what we implore today during the "Porziuncola" for ourselves through the intercession of St. Mary of the Angels and of our Blessed Father St. Francis, in this "corner of paradise", the Porziuncola. And that peace which we experience in our hearts, rejuvenated by the peace which comes from the Lord Jesus, is what we commit ourselves to sow wherever we may be. And this forgiveness, which we freely received, is what we offer to

all who may have offended us. There cannot be peace without reconciliation and pardon. But only a pacified heart, only a heart which knows it has been pardoned and which has experienced the pardon and mercy which the Lord grants us, can offer pardon, can be merciful.

In a society like ours, gravely wounded by violence, terrorism and wars which put brother against brother and people against people, it makes more sense than ever to celebrate the "Porziuncola". In a society like ours where it seems we are committed to not recognising the place of the "other" and of the "different, which corresponds to them as human beings and children of the Father of all, it makes more sense than ever to have an experience of reconciliation with the Lord and to allow ourselves to be pardoned by Him in order to be able to live in peace and reconciliation with others. Oh, if only we could feel we were pardoned by and reconciled with the Lord! We would have no hesitation in renouncing those arms which impose the "peace of the dead"; we would not hesitate in being the first to extend our arms to embrace the "distant", the "different" and the "other" in order to make them "our neighbour" and to treat them as our brothers and sisters."

Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General OFM

BELGIUM – *Formation in common of the missionaries of the Franciscan Orders*

Formation in common for the "ad gentes" missionaries of the First Order, Friars Minor, Capuchins and Conventuals, will begin in September 2005. The project of collaboration comes from the will of the Ministers General of the three families, who have approved the "Inter-obedience project for the formation of missionaries" presented by the Secretaries General for Missionary Evangelisation of the three Orders on the 20th March 2005.

The Secretaries General for Missionary Evangelisation met at "Notre Dame des Nations", the House of the Friars Minor in Brussels, Belgium, on the 7th and 8th July. With the local fraternity and two formators, a Conventual and a Capuchin, they planned the project.

The preparation will consist of a period of common life during which the missionaries will be helped to prepare for

life in an intercultural fraternity. The group will be supervised by formators of the three Franciscan Orders and coordinated by Br. Pero Vrebrac, OFM. The team will have the task of preparing the Friars for a new vision of Franciscan Mission. The new missionaries will be introduced to a knowledge of African and Asian cultures, to dialogue and inculturation. The formative process provides for study, research, reflection and the sharing of experiences of life. The first group of 14 will begin their formation on the 5th September 2005. It will be composed of 5 Friars Minor destined for Thailand and other countries in Asia, 5 Friars Minor Capuchin to be sent to Africa (Uganda and Ghana) and 4 Friars Minor Conventual, who will go to Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan. The training course is for three months and will end with a ceremony of sending.

THAILAND - *The Friars Minor receive their first candidates*

Two decades after their arrival in Thailand the Friars Minor are beginning to receive the first young men, to accompany them in learning and living the Franciscan charism within their own culture.

One Thai is fulfilling his first year of formation in the Philippines at the moment and will continue his formation in the Novitiate there. 10 other candidates have asked to be received among the Friars Minor.

The Friars have prepared a house for this purpose in the parish of Prachuap, south of Bangkok, designated for the reception of young aspirants to the Franciscan life.

The “aspirant” year for the 10 new Thai young men was begun on the 13th June 2005, the feast of St. Anthony.

All the Friars present in Thailand, the newly established fraternity for Myanmar, Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli and the

Definitor General for Asia, Br. Ambrogio Van Si, celebrant, were present at the ceremony, which was followed by the blessing of the house.

The new aspirants come from various regions of Thailand. They have completed or are about to complete their secondary schooling. Some of them have come from the Minor Seminary.

GERMANY – *International Assembly of the Missionszentrale in Berlin*

The Ministers Provincial of COTAF, responsible for the “Missionszentrale der Franziskaner”, met with the Ministers Provincial of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania associated with MZF and representatives of the two Slav Conferences in Berlin from the 27th June to the 2nd July 2005. Present at the meeting were: Br. Fr. Jakob Varnai, Definitor General, Br. Nestor Schwerz and Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli of the General Secretariat for Evangelisation and the Moderators of missionary evangelisation of the COTAF. The purpose of the International Assembly could be summarised in three words: **opening up** to the needs, challenges and hopes of the Friars of the south of the world; **sharing** ideas on the basis of concrete experiences of the reality of the countries of the south and of central Europe; **developing** common perspectives in order to face our Franciscan mission more efficiently. Some useful presentations for reflection were proposed to those present. Br. Stefano Ottenbreit, described and presented the work and history of “Missionszentrale”. Br. Nestor Schwerz and Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli offered a contribution on the missionary reality of the Order today. At the end there was a presentation by

Msgr. Wanke, the Bishop of Erfurt (the old East Germany).

The meeting was held in Berlin, an impressive city not only for its architecture which tries to mix the old with the new, but for the concrete and particular challenges which it offers to a Christian missionary presence in an urban setting. By being held in the capital of Germany, times of encounter with institutional authorities were not lacking. The participants met the President of the Chamber, the Chancellor and other representatives of the federal and local governments. The Friars Minor have been in Berlin since the XIII century. They now live in a convent and take care of a parish in the city centre, which is well known for its “soup kitchen” (Suppenküche). The encounter with these two realities of life was useful for the participants in “keeping their feet on the ground” in their reflections, discussions and decisions.

One result of this Assembly is the launch of a process of revision which will continue until up-dated and suitable criteria for the distribution of MZF help for the missionary animation of the Franciscan Family are identified.

MYANMAR – *The new Fraternity of Yangoon*

The Fraternity established for the new Franciscan presence in Myanmar met in Bangkok (Thailand) on the 8th June 2005 to begin its preparation and make its first contact with the new reality. Br. Jimmy from the Philippines, Br. Pierre and Br. Jean-François from Vietnam are the three members who will set up the new project. The addition of other Friars from the Philippines, India or Indonesia is foreseen. The new Fraternity was met in Lamsai by the Definitor General for Asia, Br. Ambrogio Van Si, and by Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli of the General Curia. The Friars who work in Thailand participated in the meeting. During a solemn celebration on the 9th June, Br. Ambrogio read the Decree by which the Order of Friars Minor established the Foundation in Myanmar and appointed Br. Jimmy Yakit as President. Br. Joseph Ha and Br. Carlo Queruli of the “China Office”, and the Sisters of Charity who collaborate with the Friars participated in the celebration.

During their time in Bangkok, the three Friars will prepare themselves for the task entrusted to them through prayer, assimilation of the Franciscan charism and getting to know each other, taking into account the fact that they come from different cultures and contexts.

The Franciscan presence in Myanmar will provide support for the local Church (spiritual animation of the clergy and religious, as well as pastoral activity) and begin Franciscan formation for the establishment of the Order in the region.

The President of the new Foundation went to Yangoon, the Capital of Myanmar, to see the place where the Friars will live. He visited the Archbishop and met the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Sisters who supported the arrival of the Friars Minor.

The start of a stable presence in Myanmar is planned to take place within the next few months.

The Educational Centres in the Order of Friars Minor

According to an investigation by the General Secretariat for Evangelisation, the Order of Friars Minor has 277 Educational Centres in which 725 Friars are working. The highest number of these centres are as follows: 38 centres in Argentina; 24 in Brazil; 21 in México; 20 in Peru; 19 in

the USA; 18 in Spain; and 16 in Colombia.

The Secretary General for Evangelisation, Br. Nestor Schwerz, and the Animator General for Educational Pastoral Activity, Br. Joaquín A. Echeverry H., sent out a questionnaire to all the 126 Entities of the Order in January

2005 to learn about the reality of the Educational Centres and the number of Friars who work in them.

106 of the 126 Entities replied, which is equivalent to 81%. 66 of the 106 Entities which responded have Educational Centres including Universities, Faculties affiliated to other Universities, Colleges, Schools and Non-Formal Centres.

The geographical distribution in the world: In **Latin America**: 160 Centres: 8 Universities (Brazil, Colombia and Mexico), 5 Faculties affiliated to other Universities (Argentina, Ecuador and Brazil), 142 Colleges/Schools, 5

Centres for non-formal education. 295 Friars are involved. In the **USA/North America**: 19 Centres: 4 Universities or Faculties and 15 Colleges, 80 Friars engaged. In **Europe**: 51 Centres: Pontifical University 'Antoniano' of Rome, 3 Faculties affiliated to other Universities (Spain and Italy), 47 Colleges, 5 non-formal Centres and 236 Friars involved. In **Asia**: 26 Centres: 3 Faculties (Israel, Hong Kong, India), 23 Colleges/Schools and 60 Friars involved. In **Africa**: 11 Centres: 9 Colleges/Schools, 3 non-formal Centres and 20 Friars involved.

VIETNAM – *The Friars Minor among ethnic minorities*

The Province of the Friars Minor in Vietnam is oriented towards a greater involvement in the mission among ethnic minorities, which are numerous but marginalised, poor and, at times, oppressed.

Br. Vincenzo Brocanelli, Moderator General for Missions, observed this during a visit to the country from the 17th to 22nd June 2005.

Some of these peoples, called "montagnards", live in the mountainous regions of Vietnam and have their own language and a rich ancestral tradition. The ethnic minorities represent one third of the Catholic population in the diocese of Dalat.

The Franciscan postulants meet families belonging to these ethnic groups each week. There is already one solemnly

professed Friar and one aspirant in the Province from one ethnic minority. Three parishes entrusted to the Friars are in areas of ethnic minorities.

The Province would like to create a new Fraternity that would constantly live among these people in order to share their life, to contribute to their education and social-economic development, and to evangelise them. It is a question of a real and proper mission among different peoples, but within the same national territory.

The Province is also involved in other "ad gentes" missions. Two Vietnamese Friars are part of the new Fraternity of Myanmar and several young Friars show a desire to make themselves available for the missions.

Franciscan Bookmark

- BONI Andrea, **St. Francis, founder and guide of his Order** (in Italian), Edizioni Porziuncola (S. Maria degli Angeli, 2005). The text is a contribution offered by the author on the occasion of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of the Order of Friars Minor. In his juridical reflection and analysis of old documents, Br. Boni concentrates his attention on the foundation and guidance of the Order of Friars Minor by St. Francis.

- AA.VV., **As a grain of wheat. The COMPI missionary foundation "Notre Dame d'Afrique"** (Italian), coll. COMPI n. 27, Ed. COMPI (Assisi, 2005). 15 years of the missionary presence of the Friars Minor in the diocese of Owando (Congo Brazzaville) have passed since 1990. This publication wishes to make the missionary reality of Congo Brazzaville known with the aim of increasing participation in the project. The book, using official documents, letters,

texts and the diaries of Br. Francesco Piccininni, who died in 1998, recounts the missionary adventure of the Friars Minor in that part of Africa.

- AA.VV., **The "Franciscan School" and the Immaculate Conception** (Italian) (Acts of the Franciscan Mariology Congress 2003), Pontificia Accademia Mariana Internationalis (Vatican City, 2005). PAMI, on the occasion of the centenary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, organised a Franciscan Mariology Congress (St. Mary of the Angels, Assisi, 4-8 December 2003) to recall and study the long Franciscan Marian tradition. It is possible to understand from the book, which comprises the Acts, how the debate on the mystery of the Immaculate Conception enriched Franciscan spirituality, devotion, theology and mysticism down through the centuries.

Small/Big News

- The Minister General of the Friars Minor sent a letter of solidarity to the Minister Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Great Britain, Br. Austin Linus McCormack. Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, united with the Friars Minor of the entire world, expressed his condolences on the pain and suffering which had struck the people of Great Britain, especially those who live and work in London, as a result of the acts of terrorism carried out on the 7th July 2005. The Minister General expressed his firm condemnation of all forms of violence and terrorism and promised his constant prayer for peace and for those who

are suffering at this time.

- The 11th July was the feast of St. Benedict of Norcia, founder of the Benedictine Order, patron of Europe and, this year for the first time, the patron of Pope Benedict XVI. The Minister General, on the occasion, sent best wishes for his feast-day to the Pontiff in the name of the whole Order. The best wishes – Br. Carballo stated – are a constant prayer to the "Father of mercies" that, through the intercession of his patron and the patron of Europe, his apostolic ministry might be a contact point for eastern and western spirituality, that his guidance might show people

and peoples the path to true peace and that his word might arouse passion for all that is human.

- The Franciscan Conference of Mexico (Coframex) has organised the first Congress of the Franciscan Family, to be held in Santiago de Querétaro from 22nd to 25th September 2005. The Congress was proposed in preparation for the VIII Centenary of the Foundation of the Order with the aim of increasing the awareness of belonging to a single “Franciscan body” and to publicly manifest the proposal of Franciscan evangelisation. For further information on the programme and participation you should consult the web site: <http://www.coframex.org.mx>

- From the 15th to 20th August 2005, coinciding with the celebration of World Youth Day in Cologne (Germany), a Franciscan Gathering is being organised during which the following topics will be developed: Monday, 15th: We have come...; Tuesday, 16th: God calls...; Wednesday, 17th: Man and women... among others; Thursday, 18th: The Earth... as a mother; Friday, 19th: The Cross... in him who suffers; Saturday, 20th: Sending out... on a journey. The Gathering, coordinated by the Ministers Provincial of Germany and the Franciscan “Missionszentrale”, an organisation for missionary animation of the Franciscan Transalpine Conference, is meant to be an intense time of meeting and witness, of recollection and prayer, and of information on Franciscan and Clarean spirituality. The Minister General of the Order, Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, will be present on the 16th and 17th. The Musical “Clare-Francis” will be staged during these days.

- The Young Franciscans also wish to celebrate a “Franciscan Festival” during the World Youth Day 2005. All young people who aspire to the Franciscan spirituality or charism are invited to meet at the Church of the Friars Minor (OFM) in Düsseldorf from 16.30 onwards in the afternoon of the 17th August. For further information on this event send an e-mail to: gifragmg@ciofs.org.

- The *International Scotus Commission*, on the occasion of the Centenary of the death of Blessed John Duns Scotus (2008), began the preparation of a volume of studies on the figure of the *Doctor subtilis* and on Scotism in its various expressions. The volume is also meant to be an homage, on the part of colleagues and disciples, to the memory of Prof. César Saco, OFM, who died on the 19th February 2005. Father Saco, a member of the Scotus Commission

for 40 years and of which he was Vice President, was a professor at the Pontifical University Antonianum. Those scholars who wish to offer their contribution, connected in whatever way to the work and figure of John Duns Scotus, should send in notice of their participation, giving the title of the contribution they wish to make. Further indications for the preparation of the book will be given during the month of September 2005. Send your articles to: Martín Carbajo Núñez, Pontifical University Antonianum, via Merulana, 124b, 00185 Roma (Italia). The E-Mail address is: cnmartin@ofm.org or antonianumfacteol@ofm.org, Tel. +39.06.70373428.

- A study Congress on “Ubertino da Casale on the VII centenary of the *Arbor Vitae Crucifixae Jesu* (1305-2005)” will be held in the Sanctuary of La Verna on the 15th September 2005. The Congress will be presided over by Fr. Fortunato Iozzelli. Also taking part are: Prof. Daniele Solvi (The historical figure of Ubertino da Casale: themes and problems); Prof. Gabriele Zaccagnini (the spirituality of Ubertino da Casale); Prof. Marina Soriani Innocenti (Ubertino da Casale, the preacher); Prof. Nicoletta Baldini (The *Arbor Vitae* of Ubertino da Casale in iconographic sources). To book or to get further information: phone +39.057.5534211, send a fax to +39.057.5599320 or e-mail la.verna@libero.it

- Under the title of “The Path of Francis, where nature and spirituality come together”, the Rieti Tourist Board (APT) has produced a DVD on the holy places of the Rieti Valley (Italy) in English, Italian and Spanish. The initiative was coordinated by the directors of the APT, Diego Di Paolo, Carla Garutti and Marina Palazzoli. The DVD presents the main sanctuaries of the Rieti Valley: Poggio Bustone, Fontecolombo, la Foresta and Greccio. It is also possible to access maps and routes to travel, together with information that is useful for the pilgrim, through computer support. For further information consult the Rieti Tourist Board site at <http://www.apr.rieti.it>

- The International Biographical Centre of Cambridge (England), granted Br. Alberto Montealegre, a Friar Minor of the Holy Faith Province in Colombia, the honour of “International Educator 2005”. The recognition is granted to personalities who have distinguished themselves in the area of education on the international level. Fr. Montealegre dedicated his life to teaching and education for some 57 years. He is presently the Rector of the “St. Bonaventure University” of Cartagena in Colombia.

New Ministers Provincial

- **Br. Balázs Barsi** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Mary in Hungary.
- **Br. Caoimhín O’Laoide** was elected Minister Provincial of the Franciscan Province of Ireland.
- **Br. Michael Copps** was elected Minister Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Great Britain.

New Visitors General

- **Br. Paolo Ferrario** (St. Charles Borromeo Province, Milan), Visitor to the Sacred Heart of BVM Prov., Liguria (Italy).
- **Br. Guido Moacir Scheidt** (Immac. Concept. Prov. Brazil), Visitor to the Holy Name of Jesus Prov., Anapolis (Brazil).
- **Br. Louis Mascarenhas** (Custody of St. John Baptist, Pakistan), Visitor to Prov. St. Peter Baptist (Philippines).
- **Br. Stefan Banković** (Holy Redeemer Province, Slovakia), Visitor to Prov. of Bohemia and Moravia (Czech

Republic).

- **Br. Bertin Miller** (Sacred Heart Province, USA), Visitor to the Prov. of Our Lady of Guadalupe, (USA).
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Agenda of the Minister General

- **from 1st to 2nd August** – The “Porziuncola” penitential service at St. Mary of the Angels.
- **from 3rd to 6th August** – Meeting with Friars in Medjugorje (Bosnia Herzegovina).
- **from 16th to 18th August** – Participation in World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne (Germany).
- **from 21st August to 2nd September** – Visit to the Province of the Incarnate Word (Togo).
- **from 5th to 17th September** – “Tempo forte” of the Minister and Definitory General in Rome (Italy).
- **from 19th to 23rd September** – Visit to the Province of St. Paul the Apostle (Malta).
- **from 25th to 27th September** – Visit to the Province of St. Vigil in Trent (Italy).
- **from 28th to 30th September** – Plenary of the Congreg. for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

FRATERNITAS - OFM – Rome

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