Dear brothers all over the world, it’s Christmas, and I want to send you my good wishes for this celebration. And I recall to you what Pope Francis said on November 23. Imagine: we were four hundred friars from the whole of the Franciscan family. The Pope spoke on minority. That we are friars, friars minor. Listen to a little of what he said:

“In all certainty we can say that minority [for St. Francis] … was born from contemplation of the incarnation of the Son of God, and is summarized in the image of making oneself small, like a seed.”

Therefore, brothers, Christmas for St. Francis is the heart of his life-choice. The eternal Son of God became man, not in a palace, not surrounded by riches and ease, but did so making himself little and poor. And this is important: the Most High makes himself the smallest, but also makes himself a seed, that is, the beginning of a new life.

My wish is that we might contemplate in the Nativity, at this feast of Christmas, something that is part of our life, our being lesser brothers. And being lesser brothers also means embracing another important phrase of Jesus: the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, to give his life. Let us imagine and seek to keep in mind how blessed it is that we are able to serve, that we can make ourselves useful to each other, not looking down from on high, but as little ones, as lesser ones.

It is in this sense, dear brothers, that I wish you, this year once again, a happy and holy Christmas.

Br. Mauro Jöhri,
General Minister of the Friars Minor Capuchin
Advent Day of Recollection with Br. Raniero Cantalamessa

Watch! was the exhortation of Br. Raniero Cantalamessa, Capuchin and Preacher to the Papal Household, at the day of recollection he gave this past December 5. His reflection was given to the brothers of the Capuchin General Curia for the beginning of Advent.

We are happy to make available the written text and the audio (conference and homily).

Marana Tha!

Materials for download:
- Raniero Cantalamessa OFMCap – Advent 2017 – word (Italian)
- Raniero Cantalamessa OFMCap – Advent 2017 – audio (Italian)
- Raniero Cantalamessa OFMCap – Homily – audio (Italian)

Fr. Raniero’s Sermons at the Vatican

All things were created through him and for him (Col 1:16) is the theme of this year’s Advent sermons of Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher to the Papal Household. Given the calendar this year, there will be only two sermons. The meditations this Advent aim to put the person of Christ at the center, between the great realities of the cosmos and history, space and time, and humanity and the creation. The theme, Fr. Raniero explains, is motivated by how a scientistic vision, “even takes Christ away from the center of the universe with one blow. He is reduced, to use the words of M. Blondel, to ‘a historical incident, isolated from the cosmos as a false episode, an intruder or a lost soul in the crushing and hostile immensity of the Universe.’” The practical aim is that of putting Christ again at the ‘center,’ above all in our personal life and through the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.
Creation of the New Diocese of Siuna, Nicaragua

Elevation of the diocese of the Apostolic Vicariate of Bluefields; creation of the new diocese of Siuna (Nicaragua) and appointment of the first bishops.

Pope Francis has elevated the Apostolic Vicariate of Bluefields to a diocese and appointed as bishop Most Rev. Paul Schmitz, OFM Cap., until now Apostolic Vicar of the same see.

At the same time, the Pope has approved the creation of the new diocese of Siuna and has appointed as the first bishop Most Rev. David Albin Zywiec Sidor, OFM Cap., until now auxiliary bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Bluefields.

The new diocese of Bluefields remains in the southern region, with nine civil districts, and will be a suffragan see of the metropolitan see of Managua.

The new diocese of Siuna (Siunaënsis) is located in the northern region, at least for now, with eleven civil districts. For now the seat will be the parish church of Siuna. The new diocese will also be a suffragan see of the Archdiocese of Managua.

A New Capuchin Bishop in Japan

Vatican City. Pope Francis, after having accepted the resignation from pastoral governance of the diocese of Naha (Japan) of Most Rev. Berard Toshio Oshikawa OFM Conv., has appointed Br. Wayne Berndt, OFM Cap. as the new Bishop. Br. Wayne is currently pastor in Yonabaru.

Br. Wayne Berndt, OFM Cap., was born on May 15, 1954 in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, USA (diocese of Worcester). He entered the Capuchin Order in the Province of New York-New England, USA and made temporary and then perpetual religious profession on August 16, 1976 and June 28, 1980, respectively. Arriving in Japan in 1981, he first studied the Japanese language for two years in Tokyo. He was ordained priest on May 21, 1983 in Yonkers, New York.


One can therefore see that the bishop-elect arrives at this new service to the Church with extensive pastoral experience. Furthermore, having been in Japan for more than thirty years, he will be well equipped by his ability in the Japanese language and his knowledge of the history, culture, and traditions of the country. The Capuchin Order is honored to have one of its sons raised to this challenging service for the glory of God and the good of the Church in Japan. All the best to the new bishop!
Elections and appointments

Custodia dell’Ecuador – elections:
CU: fr. José Dick Ramírez Chalán  
1C: fr. Germán Aníbal Arteaga Badillo  
2C: fr. Darwin Francisco Orozco Orozco  
3C: fr. Juan José Jima Lalangui  
4C: fr. Leandro Denis Delgado Vélez  
Date: 17.11.2017  
Place: Casa de Espiritualidad “La Inmaculada” de Quito, Ecuador  
President: fr. Benjamín Echeverría Martínez, Min. Prov. Spagna

Custodia Generale di Guatemala - Honduras - El Salvador – elections:
CU: fr. Hugo Estuardo Quezada Foronda (confermato)  
1C: fr. Oscar Arnoldo Méndez Santos  
2C: fr. Jorge Humberto Aguilar Linarez  
3C: fr. Milton Alirio Jordán Chigua  
4C: fr. Juan Pablo Lobos Mendoza  
Date: 06.12.2017  
Place: Casa de Retiro Claret - Ciudad de Guatemala.  

Custodia Generale di Nicaragua - Costa Rica – Panamá – elections:
CU: fr. Benigno Varela Castro  
1C: fr. Alex Sánchez Obando  
2C: fr. Berman Bans Arce  
3C: fr. Mauricio Monge Rivera  
4C: fr. Amado Flores Saavedra  
Date: 13.12.2017  
Place: Casa de retiros Alvernia, Cartago - Costa Rica  
President: fr. Štefan Kožuh, Vicario Generale

Provincia di Maranhão-Pará-Amapá, Brasile – elections:
MP: fr. Sílvio do Socorro de Almeida Pereira  
VP: fr. José Nilton Leandro Costa  
2C: fr. Hugo César Sousa de Oliveira  
3C: fr. Francisco Ezequiel Páscoa da Silva  
4C: fr. Raphael Hattyla Reis Araújo  
Date: 14.12.2017  
Place: Convento “Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora” Belém do Pará, Brasile  
President: fr. Sergio M. Dal Moro, Consigliere Generale
1. We invite you to use the **OFMCap** mobile app. It is a free app for **Android**, **Apple iOS**, and **Windows** that lets you see the latest news on www.ofmcap.org and also makes available a full library of all the most important Capuchin documents. The app is available in Italian, English, Polish, Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese.

www.youtube.com/ofmcapTV

2. Check out our **YouTube** channel at www.youtube.com/ofmcapTV. There you can find almost 200 videos that present the most important recent events of the Capuchin General Curia. A new video appears on the channel each week. We invite you to subscribe!

3. Google Plus. The various Capuchin meetings are accurately recorded photographically, such that you can see all the brothers from all over the world who participate in the various events of the Order at the international level. All the photos provided by the Capuchin General Curia are available by means of Google Plus. We invite you to visit and wish you a pleasant viewing of our photo galleries. The address is [https://plus.google.com/+UfficioComunicazioniOFMCap](https://plus.google.com/+UfficioComunicazioniOFMCap)

4. Are you on Twitter? So are we. Follow us at [@ofmcapdotorg](https://twitter.com/ofmcapdotorg)
5. The BICI Bulletin of International Capuchin Information: is a multimedia electronic newsletter published monthly in seven languages, containing the latest news of the life and activity of the Capuchin General Curia as well as important information on the life of the Order. The interactive elements offer a rich multimedia experience, enriching the material presented on the pages. If you are not subscribed to BICI, you can sign up in any of the seven available languages. Just go to www.bici.ofmcap.org and select the language from the box at the right, entering your name and email and then clicking subscribe. We wish you happy reading as you keep up with the news of the life of the Order.

6. Documents of the Order in electronic format. On the website www.ofmcap.org we have prepared a special section where you can download all the most important documents of the Order, professionally prepared in the most common electronic formats: Word, PDF, EPUB, and MOBI. You will find the Constitutions, the Plenary Councils of the Order, the letters of the general ministers, and more. All of these texts can now be read and studied by means of a smartphone, e-reader, or tablet. The documents are furnished with internal links for easy navigation. Everything can be found at www.ofmcap.org in the Documents section.

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