



of the General Minister

Dear Brothers, it's Easter and I want to send my good wishes. We know, however, that Easter follows Good Friday. The Cross comes first. Jesus embraced the Cross until death and then rose again. Have you ever wondered how Francis, our founder, experienced Easter? It seems to me that above all it was on La Verna – when he felt alone and abandoned by his friars, when he was asking himself over and over, *My God, who are You and who am I?* It was then that he found himself before the Crucified, and when he identified himself with the same Crucified One. He received the stigmata and in that moment he embraced both the Crucified and his own cross as well. Thus Francis became able to say: *You are good, all good, the highest good, You are beauty, You are meekness.* This is my hope for all of you, that you do not fear to embrace your crosses, your sufferings and difficulties, because it is by means of them that you will find an experience of Easter in your lives. Brothers! Happy Easter!*

Br. Mauro Jöhri OFMCap
General Minister

*Audio transcription of the video greeting

[Watch the video of the General Minister \(in Italian\)](#)

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The General Curia on Retreat



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Listening to the Testament of St. Francis

Despite the rainy days, twenty friars followed the meditations offered by the preacher, Br. Raffaele Ruffo, with joy and enthusiasm.

As usual, the General Curia retreat was held in Frascati, in our beautiful friary that for many years has welcomed friars from all over the world for purposes of formation. It is among the oldest friaries in the Order (1573-1574), and where Cardinal Venerable Guglielmo Massaja died and was buried after spending the last years of his life there.

The retreat ran from March 4 to 9 and was animated by Br. Raffaele Ruffo, a friar of the Province of Genoa but currently living in France, in the community of Clermont-Ferrand, where he also the guardian. He was also recently elected counselor of the Province of France.

The meditations were on the theme

of the Testament of St. Francis. Br. Raffaele commented, step by step, on the first part of the Testament, enriching each moment with other Franciscan texts. In 2009 Br. Raffaele was awarded the doctorate by the theological faculty of northern Italy, defending his dissertation, *La lode nell'esperienza spirituale di Francesco d'Assisi* (Praise in the spiritual experience of St. Francis of Assisi). He has also published other works in the area of Franciscan spirituality (*Francesco uomo della lode*, EMP, 2011; *Le virtù francescane. Un itinerario di gioia per un nuovo stile di vita*, Porziun-

cola, 2013; *Francesco d'Assisi. Un santo dai mille volti*, EMP, 2014; *Non voglio essere ladro. Francesco d'Assisi e la restituzione dei beni*, EDB, 2015). His background was therefore a clear guarantee of the quality and level of the meditations for the retreat. In fact, the experience of the participants was unanimously positive. For those who would like to explore the meditations and homilies given by Br. Raffaele, we present the audio files below. To him go our thanks for everything he shared with us during the retreat.



Google disk



[Download the audio material - 530 MB](#)



[Listen to the meditations and homilies \(in Italian\)](#)

Br. Cecilio Maria of Costa Serina OFM Cap – Venerable

Br. Cecilio Maria of Costa Serina, founder of the St. Francis Charity for the Poor in Milan (Opera San Francesco per i Poveri), Venerable.

On the afternoon of March 6, 2018 Pope Francis received in audience the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato, and authorized him to promulgate the decree *super virtutibus* of the Servant of God Cecilio Maria Cortinovis of Costa Serina, founder of the St. Francis Charities for the Poor in Milan.

The Servant of God was born in Nespello, a neighborhood of Costa Serina (Italian civil province of Bergamo) on November 7, 1885 to Lorenzo and Angela Gherardi, the seventh of nine children, and was baptized the next day with the names Pietro Antonio. While still an adolescent he worked in the fields and on the range to contribute to the support of the family.

On April 7, 1896 he received first Communion. A few years later, following his mother's example, he asked to be received into the Franciscan Third Order.

In the hard work of his first twenty-two years with the animals and in the forests and fields, Pietro Antonio cultivated in his heart a growing call to consecrate himself to God. On the advice of his pastor he chose the Capuchin life and on April 22, 1908 he arrived at the novitiate friary in Lovere. There he was invested in the habit of the Capuchin Friars Minor on July 29, 1908 and was given the name Br. Cecilio Maria. On August 2, 1909 he made his religious profession and the next day left Lovere for the friary of Albino, where obedience called him to the assignments of sacristan, refectorian, assistant porter, and infirmarian.

Five months later he was transferred to the friary of Cremona and there had the same tasks. There he remained only three months because on April 29, 1910 he was called to the friary of Milano-Monforte, which was the Provincia late. There he remained until October 19, 1982 when he was transferred to the Capuchin infirmary in Bergamo.

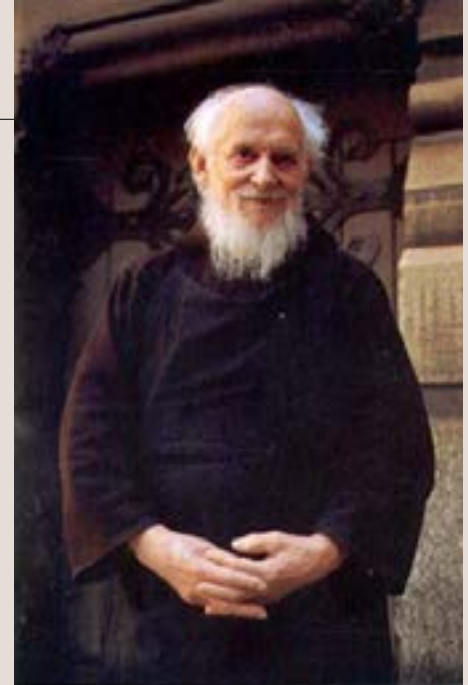
Br. Cecilio Maria's first tasks in the friary of Milano-Monforte were care for the common spaces, infirmarian, and assistant sacristan. In April 1914 he contracted meningitis and there was fear for his survival. It was on this occasion that he had a deep spiritual experience in which he experienced the benevolent judgment of God in the moment of final judgment. From his diary we know that this experience remained a vivid memory. His healing, as he himself attests, was thanks to the intercession of the Capuchin friar and then Servant of God (today Blessed) Innocent of Berzo, whose cause for beatification was active at the time.

In 1916, during the explosion of the First World War, Br. Cecilio Maria was called to arms. Due to poor health, however, he was sent back to Milan only a few months later. There, on February 2, 1918, he made his solemn profession.

With the war the number of poor grew and the door of the friary became a meeting point. Br. Cecilio Maria substituted often and willingly for the porter and there met the poor to whom he did not know how to say no. In 1921 he was appointed porter and held this office until 1970. It was in this discreet service that he met Marcello Candia, the Milanese industrialist who left everything and went to Brazil to serve the lepers. With simplicity Candia used to affirm that he learned to serve the poor in the school of Br. Cecilio Maria.

In 1925, when he heard of the death of Venerable Daniele of Samarate, the Capuchin missionary priest in Brazil, himself an apostle as a leper among lepers, Br. Cecilio Maria asked his superiors to go as a missionary to take care of those sick with leprosy, but his request was not granted. Thus he remained in Milan as porter and questor for the poor of the friary.

When the Second World War blew up, Br. Cecilio Maria, despite the bombs, – some struck even the friary of Milano-Monforte – did not move from the door and kept responding to the needs of many people who needed everything,



as well as the two cloistered monasteries that depended on his questing to live.

Many times he succeeded in misleading the SS, which kept the friary under surveillance after the arrest and deportation into a concentration camp (June 13, 1944) of Father Giannantonio Agosti da Romallo, who was confessor at the cathedral and was accused of distributing passports to Jews.

At the end of the war the poor in line at the door of the friary was even longer. Br. Cecilio Maria wished for a place to receive these men and women that he saw waiting in an endless line and in all kinds of weather. His prayer was heard in 1959 when Dr. Emilio Grignani offered to build a structure to welcome them on the last bit of land that belonged to the friary. On December 20, 1959 the house which would be called St. Francis Charities, with full services and 150 places to sit, was solemnly dedicated by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Blessed Paul VI. There Br. Cecilio Maria kept serving the poor until 1979, when his health began to decline.

On October 19, 1982, with his condition worsening, Br. Cecilio Maria was transferred to the Capuchin infirmary in Bergamo. Even there, when it was possible, he continued to receive people who sought him out for a word of comfort. Br. Cecilio Maria died peacefully on April 10, 1984. After the solemn funeral, celebrated in the church of the friary of Milano-Monforte, he was buried in the Greater Cemetery of Milan. On January 21, 1989 his remains were translated to the church of Milano-Monforte, next to his St. Francis Charities.

The gift of a visit

On this past March 17, Pope Francis visited Pietrelcina and San Giovanni Rotondo, the places associated with St. Pio. In fact, it was not only a visit but also a pilgrimage to this land blessed by the presence of this extraordinary figure who by his holiness and with the wounds of the Crucified impressed on his body—as happened also with our Seraphic Father St. Francis—has reached souls near and far, drawing them to the Lord. Thanks to the shining events of his life, his land, Gargano, has become like another Holy Land.

Pope Francis's visit was also a pilgrimage, a time to pray and ask the intercession of St. Pio on his pontificate, which in a time of much struggle and many problems, needs the support of the saints. It was also a time to pray for the Church,

that her children may be faithful to her and love her, to pray for the world, that wars may cease and the multitude who suffer from hunger, illness, and so many other ills might find in St. Pio a support and an intercessor before God.

In the morning Pope Francis visited the two places, Pietrelcina and San Giovanni Rotondo, to mark two anniversaries. The first was that of the stigmata of St. Pio, one hundred years ago, which would become for him the cause of much suspicion and misunderstanding. The second was the saint's final passing from this life in September 1968, fifty years ago, which did not become an abandonment of his spiritual children but led to a greater diffusion

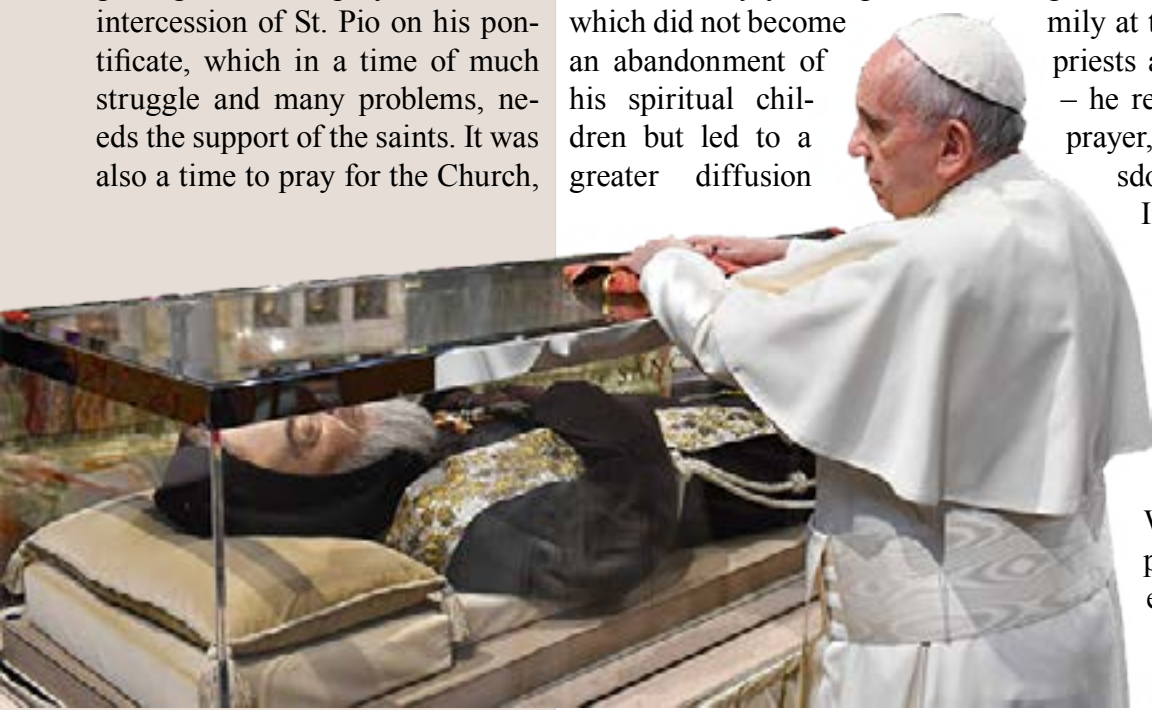
of his reputation for holiness. Even now the spiritual odor of sanctity that rises from his stigmata continues to draw many souls.

Both parts of the Pope's visit drew large crowds, first at Pietrelcina and then at San Giovanni Rotondo. In Pietrelcina the Pope was welcomed by Bishop Felice Accrocca, a noted Franciscan scholar, and spoke with great simplicity to the people, emphasizing the importance of faith for living in peace and serenity.

In San Giovanni Rotondo the Pope met with the sick, children, and friars ... he met with and greeted a great number of people. In his homily at the Mass – at which many priests and bishops concelebrated – he recommended three things: prayer, littleness, and true wisdom.

In closing, Most Rev. Michele Castoro, bishop of Manfredonia-Vieste-San Giovanni Rotondo, turned to Pope Francis with a moving greeting of thanks for the gift of his visit.

We hope you enjoy all the photos and videos of the event.



Video Pietrelcina, San Giovanni Rotondo 17.03.2018.

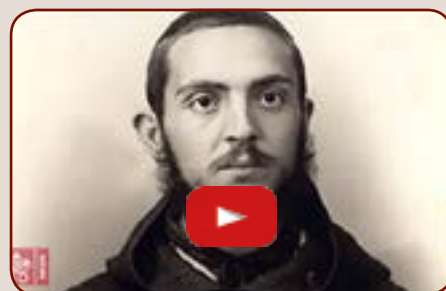
Papa Francesco a Pietrelcina



Pastoral Visit to Pietrelcina



Il Papa sui luoghi di San Pio



Il Papa venera il corpo di padre Pio



Papa: imitiamo padre Pio



"Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza"



Pastoral Visit to San Giovanni



Sulla tomba di San Pio



Rupnik: chi ama conosce le stigmate



Photo Pietrelcina, San Giovanni Rotondo 17.03.2018.

Ufficio Comunicazioni OFMCap



L'Osservatore Romano



Voce di Padre Pio



Key:



• A red 'play' button means that there is a video to see. Click to watch the video.



• A blue 'play' button means that there is a photo gallery to see. Click to see the photos.

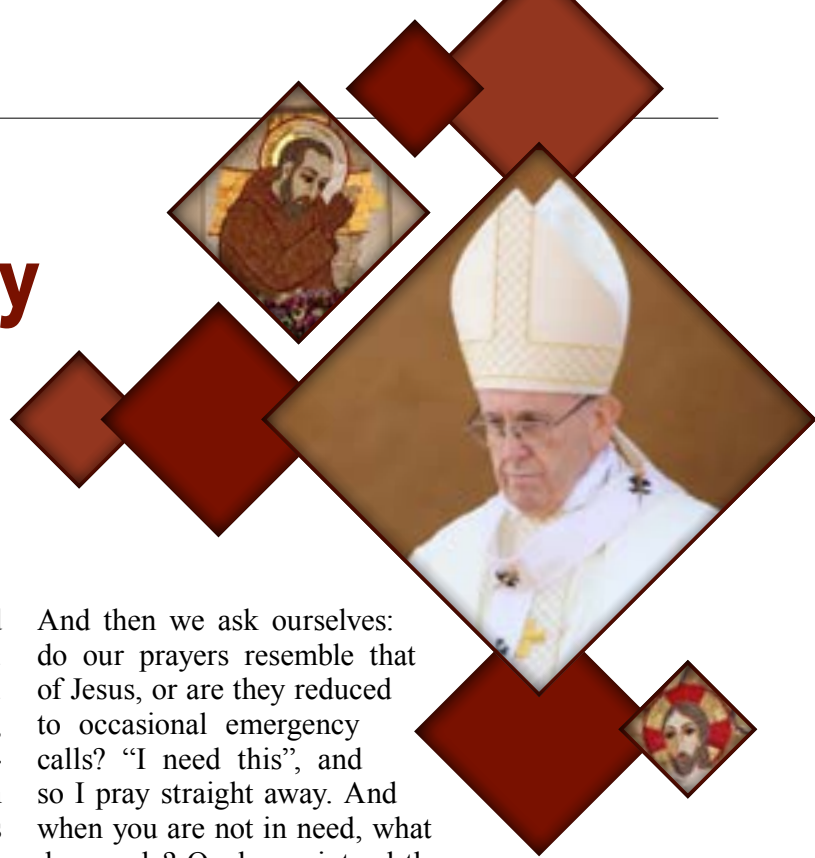
Pope Francis homily at Mass in San Giovanni Rotondo

March 17, 2018

From the biblical Readings we have heard, I would like to draw three words: prayer, smallness, wisdom. Prayer. Today's Gospel presents us Jesus Who prays. From His heart, these words flow: "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" (Mt 11: 25). Prayer comes from Jesus spontaneously, but it was not optional: he frequently retreated to deserted places to pray (cf. Mk 1: 35); dialogue with the Father was in first place. And the disciples discovered in this way, naturally, how important prayer was so that one day they asked Him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11: 1). If we want to imitate Jesus, let us too begin where he started from, that is, from prayer.

We can ask ourselves: do we Christians pray enough? Often, in the moment of prayer, many excuses come to mind, many urgent things to do... At times, then, we set prayer aside because we are caught up in an activism that becomes inconclusive when we forget "what is better" (Lk 10: 42), when one forgets that without Him we cannot do anything (cf. Jn 15: 5), and in this way we abandon prayer. Saint Pio, fifty years after he went to heaven, helps us because he wished to leave us the legacy of prayer. He recommended, "Pray a lot, my children, pray always, never tiring" (Words to the Second International Congress of Prayer Groups, 5 May 1966). Jesus in the Gospel also shows us how to pray. First of all, he says: "I praise you, Father"; He does not begin by saying, "I need this and that", but, "I praise you". One does not know the Father without opening oneself to praise, without devoting time to Him alone, without adoring. How we have forgotten the prayer of adoration, the prayer of praise! We must resume this. Each one of us can ask: how do I worship? When do I worship? When do I praise God? Resume the prayer of adoration and praise. It is the personal context, face to face, staying in silence before the Lord, the secret to entering ever more into communion with Him. Prayer can be born as a request, even for an urgent intervention, but it matures in prayer and adoration. Mature prayer. It then becomes truly personal, as for Jesus, who then engages freely in dialogue with the Father: "Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do" (Mt 11: 26). And then, in free and trustful dialogue, prayer takes on all of life and takes it before God.

And then we ask ourselves: do our prayers resemble that of Jesus, or are they reduced to occasional emergency calls? "I need this", and so I pray straight away. And when you are not in need, what do you do? Or do we intend them as tranquilizers to take in regular doses, to have a little relief from stress? No, prayer is an act of love, of staying with God and taking to Him the life of the world: it is an indispensable work of spiritual mercy. And if we do not entrust our brothers and situations to the Lord, who will? Who will intercede, who will take care to knock on the heart of God to open the door to humanity in need? For this, Father Pio left us the prayer groups. He said to them, "It is prayer, this joined force of all good souls, that moves the world, that renews consciences ... that heals the sick, that sanctifies work, that raises healthcare, that gives moral strength ... that spreads God's smile and blessing on every languor and weakness (ibid). Let us safeguard these words, and ask ourselves again: do I pray? And when I pray, do I know how to praise, do I know how to worship, do I know how to take my life, and that of all people, to God? Second word: smallness. In the Gospel, Jesus praises the Father because He revealed the mysteries of His Kingdom to the little ones. Who are these little ones, who know how to receive the secrets of God? The little ones are those who are in need of the great, who are not self-sufficient, who do not think that they need only themselves. The little are those who have a humble and open heart, poor and needy, who are aware of the need to pray, to entrust themselves and to let themselves be accompanied. The heart of these little ones is like an antenna: it captures the signal from God, immediately, they understand immediately. Because God seeks contact with all, but those who make themselves great create enormous interference, and the desire for God does not arrive when one is full of oneself, there is no room for God. This is why He prefers the little ones, He reveals Himself to them, and the way to encounter Him is that of stooping low, of shrinking inwardly, of acknowledging oneself as in need. The mystery of Jesus Christ is a mystery of smallness: He lowered Himself,



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General Chapter 84 – A.D. 2012

Video 1



Video 2



Video 3



Video 4



Foto 1



Foto 2



Foto 3

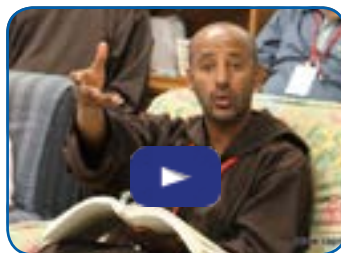


Foto 4



The General Chapters of the new Millennium **General Chapter LXXXIV** Rome, 20 August - 22 September, 2012

This chapter too was celebrated in Rome, at the International College 'San Lorenzo da Brindisi,' as has been the norm since the origin of the current College complex (1968), since it is the only remaining structure big enough for such as assembly of friar-capitulars.

The Chapter took place from August 20 to September 22. 171 friar-capitulars participated, coming from all over the world. At the time of the Chapter the statistics of the Order were as follows: 10,364 professed friars present in 106 countries in 155 circumscriptions (81 provinces, 9 general vice provinces, 17 provincial vice provinces, 17 custodies, and 31 delegations). As the length of the Chapter suggests, there were a number of tasks to be carried out. In particular, beyond the elections of the General Minister and Definitory, there was the renewal of the Constitutions. The calendar of the Chapter set the following days for the elections: August 27 for the General Minister, Au-

gust 30 for the General Definitors, and August 31 for the General Vicar. The schedule also included the traditional pilgrimage to Assisi (September 1) as well as visits to Leonessa (September 16) and San Giovanni Rotondo (September 22).

The work of the Chapter began with the presentation of the General Minister's report on the state of the Order, which could be summarized with the image of a flame to be rekindled. Among current challenges, the report noted relativism, secularization, and the meaning of consecrated life. It also treated the transmission of the charism: the priority of formation, the struggle for perseverance, the formative journey, the post-novitiate, and the primacy of fraternal life. Among the other practical topics was the renovation of the General Curia. The General Minister noted also the challenges that face the Order in our day, such as guaranteeing the integral transmission of our charism, fostering open and constructive dia-

logue between different parts of the Order, the diversification of works and presences, a greater collaboration between circumscriptions, and desiring the Spirit of the Lord for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel. As said, a great part of the work of the Chapter was on the revision of the Constitutions, resulting in the new text now familiar to all.

The Chapter reelected Br. Mauro Jöhri as General Minister and chose Br. Štefan Kožuh as Vicar. The Chapter also elected the members of the new Council, called at that time definitors and today councilors, to represent the various geographical regions of the world.

Finally, the Chapter treated Economic Solidarity, which makes the following funds available for the needs of the Order: the Boni Pastoris Mater fund for assistance to the global south, the San Felice da Cantalice fund for assistance to Eastern Europe, the Santa Veronica Giuliani fund for the Capuchin Poor Clares, the San Lorenzo da Brindisi fund for scholarships to the International College, the Holy Masses Fund for circumscriptions that do not receive sufficient local Mass intentions, and the Disaster Fund.

We are happy to make all the archived video and photographic material available to all who are interested.

Provincia di Medan, Indonesia – elections:

MP: br. Kornelius Sipayung (reelected)

VP: br. Guido Situmorang

2C: br. Selestinus Manalu

3C: br. Michael Manurung

4C: br. Yosafat Ivo Sinaga

Date: 16.02.2015

Place: Nagahuta, Indonesia

President: br. Victorius Dwiardy, General Councilor



Custodia Generale del Kenya - elections:

CU: br. Paul Sila (reelected)

1C: br. Arnold Shirima

2C: br. Daniel Monima

3C: br. Vincent Shumila

4C: br. Peter Waweru

Date: 21.02.2018

Place: J.J Mc Carthy ASN Spiritual Centre – Nairobi, Kenya

President: br. Michael Baptist Fernandes,
General Councilor



Provincia Flandro-Belgica – elections:

MP: br. Adri Geerts

VP: br. Kenny Brack

2C: br. Luc Vansina

3C: br. Tomasz Okoń

4C: br. Klass Blijlevens

Date: 02.03.2018

Place: Sint-Maria-Aalter, Belgio

President: br. Pio Murat, General Councilor



Custodia Generale di Nias, Indonesia – elections:

CU: br. Metodius Sarumaha (reelected)

1C: br. Hezekiel Manaö

2C: br. Robertus Waruwu

Date: 03.03.2018

Place: Rumah Pembinaan Rohani, Gunungsitoli, Nias -
Indonesia

President: br. Victorius Dwiardy, General Councilor



Custodia Provinciale della Svizzera Italiana – Appointment:

Il 8 marzo 2018 è stato proclamato il decreto della erezione della Custodia Provinciale della Svizzera Italiana alla dipendenza della provincia di Lombardia.

Sono stati nominati:

CU: br. Edy Rossi-Pedruzzi

1C: br. Michele Ravetta

2C: br. Giambattista Rosa

Date: 08.03.2018

Place: Convento del Sacro Cuore, Bellinzona, Svizzera

Proclamata dal: br. Mauro Jöhri, General Minister



Letter of Pope Francis to the General Minister

Domus Sanctae Marthae,
21 December 2017

Dear Father Mauro,
I was happy to see you recently, together with the brothers of the Franciscan Family. I was also very grateful for the Christmas wishes that you sent with the charitable gift that I marked right away for our suffering brothers and sisters and for the marginalized. Christmas raises up in us the urgency of extinguishing the thirst of the love of Jesus by means of service to the poorest of the poor as St. Francis teaches us when he contemplates the mystery of the Love that is not loved.

As I reply to your letter, I look up towards the nativity scene and I think of how you are moving towards a General Chapter and how this journey is marked by your shared reflection on the Ratio Formationis Ordinis. Looking at the little-



ness of the infant Jesus I contemplate obedience in him and the words of Paul to the Philippians resound in my heart: Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

(2: 5-8)

We read something similar in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: True obedience does not look at the person but to the motive, and if this is none other than our Creator and Lord, then it is the Lord of all that is obeyed.

(84). Here St. Ignatius deduces a reflection already proposed by St.

Bonaventure in the Major Legend of St. Francis: [This] is someone truly obedient, who doesn't argue about why he's being moved;

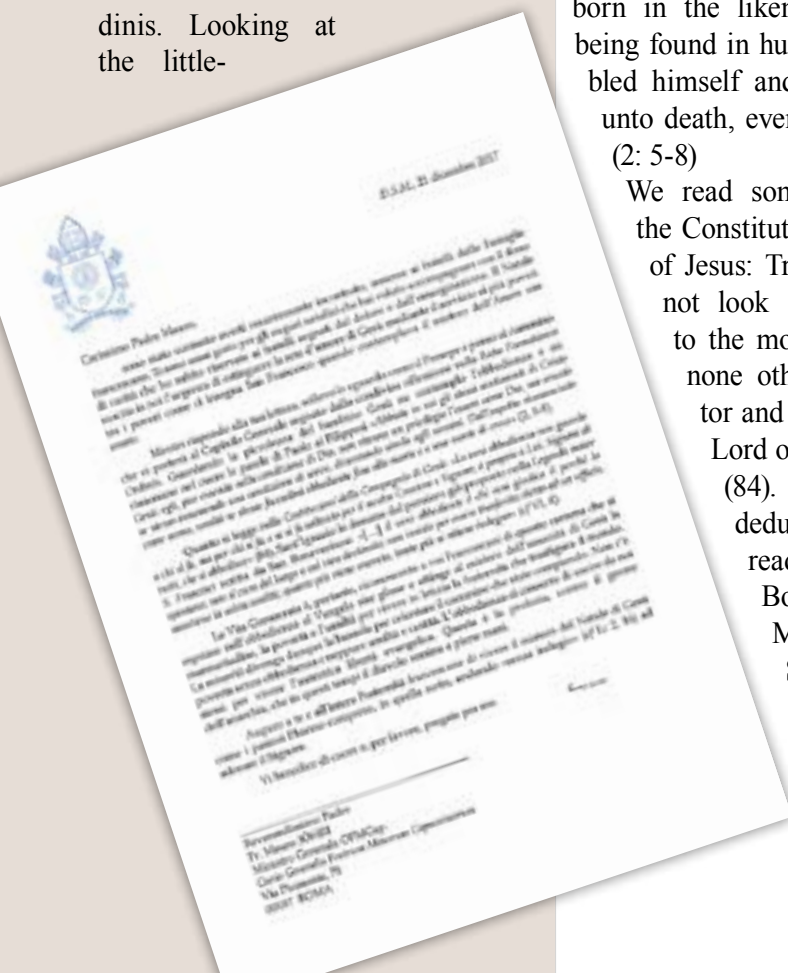
he doesn't care where he's placed, he doesn't pester you to transfer him. When raised to an office, he keeps his usual humility; the more he's honored, the more he considers himself unworthy. (VI:4)

The consecrated life is therefore grateful to you Franciscans for this, your charism that expresses itself in obedience to the Gospel sine glossa and in drawing meekness, poverty, and humility from the mystery of the humanity of Christ for the sake of living the joyful fraternity that transfigures the world. May minority therefore become the compass for orienting you on the path you are taking. There is no poverty without obedience, and no humility or chastity either. Obedience allows us to go out of ourselves in order to live true gospel freedom. This is the way to be prophetic against the seeds of anarchy which, in our time, the devil is sowing unrelentingly.

I offer my wish that you and the whole Franciscan fraternity live the mystery of the Nativity of Jesus as the shepherds understood it, in that night, when they went in haste (Luke 2:16) to adore the Lord.

I bless you from my heart. And please, pray for me.

Franciscus





San Giovanni Rotondo Photos

For the occasion of the Holy Father's pilgrimage to the places associated with Padre Pio, we are happy to make the photos of both the shrine and the pilgrimage itself—in high resolution—available to the brothers. You will find 2,300 photos taken of the shrine some years ago. Because the shrine is always developing, not all the photos show the place in its current state. The material is organized in categories to help you find what you're looking for. Everything is available to you in the hope that it will be useful for the improvement of our publications both online and in print.

Everything is found on Google Disk in the [Capuchin Creative Commons](#) section. Just click the link [San Giovanni Rotondo](#) for access to everything. If anything is used in a publication, we ask you only to indicate the source: Archivio www.ofmcap.org

*Br. Paweł Teperski OFMCap – photographer
Communications Office*



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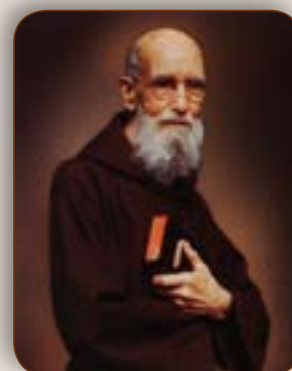
Assisi



Saints and Blessed



Franciscan Places



Blessed Solanus Casey



VI Meeting of the International Formation Council

The final meeting of the International Formation Council (CIF) was held at the General Curia in Rome from Friday, March 9 to Friday, March 16. The fourteen members from all over the world gathered together to discuss and bring to a conclusion the work on the Ratio formationis, the document on formation for the whole Order which will be presented and discussed at the next General Chapter, which will be held this August and September at our International College 'San Lorenzo da Brindisi.' Leading the meeting, as usual, were the friars of the General Secretariat of Formation, Br. Charles Alphonse and Br. Jaime Rey.

After the opening greeting of Br. Sergio Dal Moro, General Councilor, who wished to thank all the members of the CIF in the name of the General Council, Br. Jaime began the meeting by explaining the objectives and the methodology of the meeting. The focus was on the three appendices to the Ratio (culture, affectivity, and study), on which the members of the group were asked to express themselves, first during a time of personal reflection, then in continental groups, and finally in reporting their suggestions and criticisms in the plenary assembly. Everyone had the relative documents and materials available for the topics that were treated in turn, as well as the points that had emerged in the continental meetings on the Ratio. Following this, Br. Jaime made the first presentation, regarding specific

initial and special formation as these will be treated in the third chapter.

On Saturday, after having continued to discuss formation, talk began on the first appendix: culture. Then, following a break for Sunday rest, work began again on Monday with discussion of the second appendix: affectivity. In the afternoon the group made their way to Radio Vaticana in order to be there for the presentation of the series, "The theology of Pope Francis." Tuesday morning was the turn of Giovanni Dalpiaz, a Camaldolese monk and professor at the Pontifical Salesian University, who offered a sociological interpretation of the results of the questionnaire on the Ratio that was sent to all the friars. He also took questions. In the afternoon discussion on the third appendix, the Ratio studiorum began, and continued through Wednesday morning.

The next topics for the meeting were the statutes of the CIF itself and the means by which the Ratio will be put into effect in the different circumscriptions of the Order.

On Thursday the CIF concentrated on two particularly important topics: collaboration between circumscriptions for formation and the formation of formators. In the afternoon the group was led by Fr. Beppe Roggia, a Salesian and expert in formation, who has been guiding the CIF during this sexennium with his broad experience and professionalism. He assisted the group in pointing out both the posi-

ve accepts and the weaknesses of the third chapter and engaged in dialogue with the group.

Friday began with the greeting of Br. Mauro Jöhri, General Minister, who wished to thank the whole CIF for their great commitment. He thanked especially Br. Charles and Br. Jaime, who gave of themselves unsparingly in these five years. Br. Mauro pointed out how it was not easy for them, given that the CIF is a new thing, 'still an adolescent' as he put it. For this very reason Br. Mauro hoped that a certain continuity would be guaranteed in order to ensure the realization of the program of the Ratio. In conclusion, each member of the group had a chance to speak, encouraged as they were by the invitation of the General Minister to express their own impressions and to evaluate the work carried out during this sexennium.

Br. Charles, before the final words of Br. Mauro, closed the meeting by thanking everyone: the Lord, for the great gift of the Capuchin-Franciscan vocation, the General Minister, for his closeness and understanding shown at every point along the way, Br. Jaime, for his hidden and humble collaboration, each of the members of the CIF, for their patience and cooperation, the recording secretary and the translators, for their sacrifice, and the brothers of the Curia, for their welcome and for everything they had done during these days.

[See the photo galleries](#)



„Growing smaller“

Meeting of the formators of CENOC

31st January to 2nd February 2018 in Münster, Germany

Growing smaller is the name of the challenge, that Mid- and North European capuchins are facing these years: The number of brothers is decreasing and the average age is increasing more and more. In consequence houses have to be closed and caring for elderly brothers became an important task. In formation too, the new situation creates new challenges: Young people have a lot of possibilities and alternatives and it is not en vogue to make decisions which have to last for the whole life. The number of candidates decreases and their age is often at the end of the twenties or higher. Creating peer experiences for them gets harder. The few younger brothers have many responsibilities so that it is becoming difficult to find qualified brothers for formation and set them free for this work. The past years led to cooperation in formation, for example in the German speaking countries and to the common noviciate for English speaking brothers in Ireland. It led also to the fact that some provinces sent their brothers to other circumscriptions for formation. So, the 13 brothers from Ireland, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Malta had the task given by the provincial ministers to think about new and more ways to cooperate in formation, especially about the idea of a common noviciate. In the view of “growing smaller” the

challenge was to identify the core of capuchin charism for Europe as well as giving space for the different cultures, regions and their tradition of capuchin life. Also appreciating this diversity and colourfulness. A main challenge in this range is the fact that there is not one common language all over the continent of Europe. On the morning of the first day we begun work by looking at the draft of the second chapter of the ratio formationis. We talked about the five dimensions of formation with three questions: What are our comments on the draft for the secretary of formation in Rome? Where do we see the five dimensions in the reality of our existing formation? And: Which elements of the charismatic, human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic dimension do we want to stress and implement in our effort of cooperation on Mid European level? In the afternoon we reflected on the important contents and conditions for the individual formation phases: vocation, postulancy, noviciate and post-noviciate by using the available thoughts of the third chapter of the ratio formationis. Building on this foundation we identified and discussed the next morning the main topics and questions for to clarify frame conditions for a common noviciate project. We took a bit of time, perceiving the pain many of

us feel by letting go proven ways of formation, so that we can create a new way together. We do want this as we know it is necessary to face the conditions of today and bring in the assets of the individual CENOC provinces.

After lunch and coffee we dared some creative work: Three working groups designed their “Dummy noviciates” based on the ideas and thoughts of the morning. There were several common points we found in the drafts encouraging us to follow the started path: We dream of a new European fraternity in an Italian convent, representing at least all mother tongues of the participating provinces. All work in the house should be done by the brothers, we search contact with the poor and invite the surrounding people to join our prayer and pastoral work. After one year of noviciate the brothers should return for 3 months in their home countries and then come back for another common post-noviciate of 9 months to one year.

For us formators the common work was inspiring and encouraging and we hope, the provincial ministers will give a start signal now, so that we can begin the concrete work and bring forward the project of the CENOC noviciate.

CENOC formation in numbers

8 Provinces/custodies:

- Ireland
- Great Britain
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Germany
- Switzerland
- Austria-South Tyrol
- Malta

22 brothers in formation:

- 10 postulants
- 2 novices
- 10 post-novices



Instagram



franciscus

529 post
5,3 mill follower



Sentire cum Ecclesia

The **Pope's** prayer intentions



THE POPE VIDEO

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



April: That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

May: That the lay faithful may fulfil their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world to-day.



@Pontifex

Tweets 1,495



Pope Francis

Followers 17.2 M

Fasting makes us more alert and attentive to God and our neighbour, and reminds us that He alone can satisfy our hunger.

Almsgiving helps us to recognize our neighbour as our brother or sister, and to acknowledge that what we possess is never our's alone.

God, who cannot be outdone in generosity, still uses you and me to help our brothers and sisters.

With so much to do, we often neglect what is really important: our spiritual lives, and our relationship with God. So let's stop and take time to pray!

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we find our way back to the Lord, and rediscover the meaning of life.

If we dedicate more time to prayer, our hearts will reveal the lies with which we deceive ourselves, and we will find true consolation in God.