



## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CUSTODY OF KOREA

# DECREE

Prot. N. 00045/05

**T**he Capuchin presence in Korea began with the arrival of a group of four brothers from Ireland on July 16, 1986, responding positively to the invitation of Stephen Cardinal Kim. Their first, temporary residence was as guests of the Irish Columban Fathers at Donam-dong in the city of Seoul. Later, they transferred to the Franciscan friary at Chong-dong, until, in 1990, a permanent residence was purchased in Towon-dong. It became the first Capuchin friary in Korea. It was dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels by the then Irish Provincial, Br. Dermot Lynch, during his visitation in the same year.

**T**he presence, life and activities of the Capuchins in the region eventually bore fruit, attracting young Koreans to the Capuchin way of life. The first Korean postulants came in February 1993 – two of these, together with two postulants the following year, formed the first novitiate group of four in 1995. A house was rented in Chongpa-dong, Seoul, and served as a novitiate. Two more brothers arrived from Ireland in January 1995. One of them, Br. Liam O’Dea, met with an accident and died a few days later at the age of twenty-seven. In January 1996, the four novices made their temporary profession and later went to Ireland to continue their formation and also to learn English. The Lord continued to send vocations, and three more postulants entered in February of the same year.

**T**he brothers were committed to the formation of the young Koreans while continuing to consolidate the Capuchin presence in the region. In early 1996, some land was purchased in Hyochang-dong, Seoul, on which to build a friary. The building, dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels, was finished in the following June and the brothers and postulants from Towon-dong moved to the new friary. Meanwhile, the novitiate fraternity was transferred from Seoul to Gapyeong in the Diocese of Ch’unch’on. With two friaries now in Korea, the Provincial and Definitory decided to give the Capuchin presence the status of a Delegation in October 1996, with Br. Vincent Corrigan as the first Provincial Delegate.

**T**he post-novitiate stage of formation was inaugurated in Korea in February 1998. Two Korean brothers made their final commitment in May 1999 at Chongpa-dong Church. Br. Dermot Lynch, Provincial Minister, who was then on visitation, received their vows. This event marked an important phase in the implantation of the Capuchin Order in Korea. Meanwhile, permission was obtained to open a house in the diocese of Inch'on, and one was rented in Onsuri, Ganghwa-do, for two years to accommodate the perpetually professed brothers. Now ready to start "special formation", they would attend Inch'on Catholic University.

**I**n the spring of 2000 a piece of land was acquired in Gapyeong town and the novitiate building was begun. It was blessed by the Irish Vicar Provincial, Br. Peter Rodgers, on October 12, 2000 and was dedicated to St. Felix of Cantalice. Subsequently it was canonically established and became the novitiate. In June 2001, the Irish Province held its Chapter, after which Br. Edward Dowley was appointed Delegate. Two more Korean brothers made their final profession at Chongpa-dong Church on February 23, 2002. As there would now be four brothers attending Inch'on University a new house was purchased. Once this house was canonically established as a Capuchin friary the brothers in "special formation" lived there with their director.

**I**t was now time for the Capuchin Delegation of Korea to be raised to the status of a Custody under the Province of Ireland. During their visit to the Delegation from April 29 to May 5, 2003, Br. John Corriveau, OFMCap., General Minister, and Br. Joseph Nacua, OFMCap., General Definitor for Asia-Oceania, judged that the time was ripe to consider the creation of the Custody of Korea. A few weeks later, Br. Peter Rodgers, OFMCap., Irish Provincial, paid a visit to the Delegation and discussed with the brothers the question of raising it to the status of a Custody. The plan was endorsed by the brothers, and it was at their meeting in June 2003 that the Provincial Minister of Ireland and his Definitory gave their formal approval. The Irish Provincial Chapter, held in June-July 2004, approved the creation of the Custody of Korea. The approval of the area Conference (SAPCC) was given in a letter from the President, Br. Julian Messina, OFMCap., dated October 26, 2004 (Prot. No. 00898/04).

**T**he General Definitory, at its meeting on January 7, 2005, having carefully examined all the aspects of the question of constituting the Custody and having verified all the prerequisites, decided to raise the Delegation of Korea to a Custody of the Province of Ireland.

**T**herefore,  
observing all canonical provisions,

**We, with the consent of the General Definitory, according to the norms of our Constitutions (cf. No.111.1), constitute and declare established the Custody of Korea, dependent on the Province of Ireland, with all the rights and obligations of a Custody of the Order.**

**T**his decree will receive its legal force on January 29, 2005, on the Day of Commemoration of Our Lady, the day of its proclamation.

**T**he boundaries of this new Custody of Korea, which has Blessed Mary, Mother of God, Virgin made Church, as its Patroness, will coincide with the State boundaries of Korea.

**T**he members of the Custody are :

- the professed indigenous brothers of the Delegation of Korea at the time of the establishment of the Custody;

- all brothers who, at the time of establishment of the Custody of Korea, exercise their ministry in Korea;
- all brothers who will make their profession as members of the Custody;
- all brothers who will be assigned to service in the Custody of Korea.

**I**n accordance with No. 111.4 of our Constitutions, having considered the consultative votes of the perpetually professed brothers now serving in the Delegation of Korea, with the consent of the General Definitory given during our meeting of January 7, 2005, we hereby appoint as Regular Superior and councillors the following brothers:

Regular Superior	<b>Br. Edward Dowley, OFM Cap.</b>
1st Councillor	<b>Br. Patrick Keller, OFM Cap.</b>
2nd Councillor	<b>Br. Cosmas Hong, OFM Cap.</b>

**F**urthermore it is established that all brothers with perpetual vows are to join in the first chapter of the Custody (cf. Const. No. 111.4) to be held within one year. It will be the task of the Chapter to discuss the life and the testimony of the brothers and to prepare a Statute of the new Custody, as well as to specify its capitular and electoral procedures.

**W**e praise God for the birth of a new Custody of our Order, and for the brothers of the Province of Ireland, for their zealous commitment to the implantation and growth of the Capuchin presence in Korea. We also congratulate the brothers of the new Custody of Korea and invoke God's blessings upon them. May Brother Francis and Sister Clare assist them as they seek to live and to spread the seraphic spirit in that part of East Asia.

**G**iven in Rome at the General Curia  
on January 25, 2005.

Br. John Corriveau, O.F.M. Cap.  
General Minister

Br. Marek Przechowski O.F.M. Cap.  
General Secretary