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BICI, echo of the capuchin world, changes

With the year 2005, the last issue of the bi-monthly BICI is closed. It was the last issue in so far as it was a bi-monthly publication but not the end of the magazine which from now on will be published, instead, every month. But the most important newness about it is that BICI will be changed into a "newsletter of fraternal link-up". It will be completely renewed using an essential instrument, a sheet the size of an A3, consisting of four pages which will be easily legible. It will contain the most important events of our capuchin world : life at the General Curia, missionary animation, apostolic presence in various parts of the world and news about the brothers and their experiences which appear relevant to us.

The motivation which has driven the Communications Office to change the BICI magazine reflects the consciousness of the importance of immediate and speedy exchange of news in the Order as a precious possibility to feel the universal Fraternity. We recall the richness and the variety of the ways our charism is concretized in the various cultural situations. We all need to feel this Universal Fraternity as "our own" where it is possible to live our own vocation according to the form of life of St. Francis and from where we leave to give everywhere the witness to Christ's Gospel. So this change is not a send off because, as we have already stated, BICI will continue and it will also be addressed to readers outside the Order in so far as it will be available on the internet web-site of the Order. We have to live this change together in a serene way even because it seems to us important that this instrument of communication allows us to spread a Franciscan-capuchin aspect of the reality that we are living. The patrimony, belonging to each one of us, which is gathered in these pages, immediately becomes the proof of our mutual belongingness and a sign of our being brothers in the world and for the world. Above all, we believe that we, Capuchins, who are called by everybody "the friars of the people", should keep such a presence which is, at the same time, simple and friendly. Thus we would break the bread of the word and that of hope, offering even in writing our Franciscan-capuchin spirit and style. This is what has been done up to now and what we propose to continue to do.

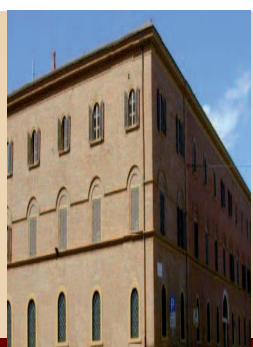
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Personnel

- Br. Janusz Niedzwiecki, of the Warsaw Province, who had been serving as porter at the International College of St Lawrence of Brindisi, in mid-November came to the Curia as porter.
- Br. Juarez De Bona, of the Province of Paraná-S.Caterina, will substitute Bro Antonio Castagnera as Secretary for the Portuguese Language during the time of his convalescence after a surgical operation he underwent.



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General Definitory Meetings

Rome - The last session was held between October 31 - November 2, 2006; the following arguments were examined :

- The situation reached in the preparations of the General Chapter. After the dispensation from the Holy See through the Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, it was decided to suspend the elective Chapter of the General Viceprovince of Ethiopia. A letter was sent to the Presidents of the Conferences of the Order in which they were asked to update the ceiling of the extraordinary expenses which is to be observed by each Conference. Such updating is to be approved by the General Minister and his Definitory. In this session were also approved the projects for the year 2006 reaching a total of USD 4, 650, 000; it was decided also to leave an amount to be used by the General Minister and his Definitory for emergency and urgent needs. The Directory for the Visitation on Financial Matters in a Circumscription was also approved.
- In the Definitory Session of January 3 – 13, 2006, the following items were examined: The annual reports of the Offices, Institutions and Fraternities depending on the General Minister. It evaluated the possible candidates who can be members of the International Commission for Financial Solidarity and the Group of Project Managers. It also approved the Statute of Financial Solidarity. The text will be translated in the languages mostly used in the Order and presented to the General Chapter of 2006. ●

02



Br. Charles Serignat returns to the Province



Rome - On November 13, 2005, Br. Charles Sérignat returned to his home province to start his new service as Provincial Vicar and guardian of the fraternity at Oxford where he had been in past years as "Senior Tutor" of the lay students in "Greyfriars Hall". Br. Charles will still continue in his duties as personal secretary to the General Minister until the next General Chapter. Charles stated that his service at the Curia and particularly his work with the General Minister was, in truth, an authentic privilege. The vision which the General Minister and his Definitory have of the Order as a fraternity of Minor Brothers in communion with the Church has helped him to obtain a deeper knowledge of the meaning of a Capuchin brother in the world today. ●



The Capuchin Historical Institute celebrates 75 years from its foundation

Rome - The Capuchin Historical Institute in Rome celebrated the 75th Anniversary of its Foundation (1930-2005). To mark this occasion, on January 13, 2006, a day of study was held in the Main Hall of St Lawrence of Brindisi College in Rome with a well prepared programme. Several members of the General Curia, led by the General Minister and the Definitors, took part. On the same occasion a commemoration was made of the 75 uninterrupted years in the world of Franciscan publications of our review *Collectanea Franciscana* which appeared for the first time in 1931. ●



Perpetual Profession of the first brother from Paraguay

Asunción (Paraguay) - Br. Gregório Benitez is the first capuchin brother to emit his perpetual profession in our Order. The function was held in the friary dedicated to St Leopold Mandić (Lambaré, Asunción – PY) on September 3, 2005. Bro João Daniel Lovato, Provincial Minister, presided over the ceremony and he was surrounded by the brothers who work in Paraguay and others who went there for the occasion. In his homily, Bro João Daniel Lovato explained the themes of joy and gratitude which the Province was living at the moment. He concluded by wishing well to Brother Gregory stating : “ Congratulations, Brother Gregory, for your courage and generosity towards the Lord; may you never forget this celebration. We congratulate as well your parents (...). We congratulate the brothers who came here to start the capuchin way of life which they have sown and are still sowing showing their faith in the power of the Gospel and the enchantment of the Franciscan charisma”. ●

A Capuchin Friar from Malta heads the national pastoral health services in Cuba

Havana (Cuba) - Br. Philip Cutajar, a capuchin from the Province of Malta, who has been doing missionary work for six years in Cuba, has been appointed by the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Cuba (COCC) to be responsible and co-ordinator of all pastoral health work in that country. Bro Philip is already experienced in this pastoral field in Cuba since for the last four-and -half years he has been the person responsible in this sector in the diocese of Santa Clara where he lives. Pastoral Health Care in Cuba is one of the few openings and opportunities which the Catholic Church has to come in contact with the people. Under the communist regime, the Church cannot have neither schools nor hospitals nor obtain space in the communications media to spread the christian message. Besides the daily Masses, the possibility to enter into the homes of the sick is a positive opportunity which can bring about fruits in evangelization especially where the Church does not enjoy full religious freedom. In order to exercise his responsibilities in this pastoral field in a country of about eleven million people, Br. Philip works together with and by means of commissions and groups which exist in all dioceses and parishes and which have as members medical doctors, visitors of the sick and ministers of the Eucharist. We congratulate our Brother for his ministry which he is exercising as a Franciscan in the world of the suffering and we offer him our prayers so that his work will be of great pastoral and spiritual success for the good of all the sick and of the Catholic Church in Cuba. ●



03



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25 years of Capuchin presence in Thailand

Bangkok (Thailand) – The Capuchins in Thailand have solemnly remembered their 25 years of presence in the country exactly on December 10, 2005. The function was held in Samphran with the participation of the Cardinal of Bangkok, two bishops and 81 concelebrants. The first brothers from the Province of Milan arrived in Bang Than in 1980; they had been called by the bishop then to give visible witness of christian spirituality and to help in their proper formation the Capuchin Poor Clares who had been in Thailand since 1936. During these 25 years, there are already 5 local Capuchin priests, three professed brothers, three postulants and 29 candidates. The brothers from the Lombardy province working in Thailand are now four. ●

A new Viceprovince of three million sq kms



Abu Dhabi (Arab Emirates): November 9, 2005 was a very important date in the history of the Apostolic Vicariate of Arabia, of the Capuchin Order and of the Tuscan province. In its meeting of June 20-24, 2005, the general Definitory decided to hold the consultation for the appointment of the Viceprovincial and the Councillors of the general Viceprovince of Arabia which,

then, was established canonically on November 9, 2005. Today it is no more the small 'Mission of Aden'! Several and various circumstances have changed its history, others have extended its boundaries which not only have assured it to survive but also to flourish and develop and have marked its evolution to its present state. The impossibility of the Tuscan province to support the missionary commitment which became more burdensome especially with the boom of immigration and which brought a total of a million catholics in the area of the Gulf alone, made the government of the Order to involve itself more earnestly in such a special situation of this Capuchin presence in the muslim world. The repeated visits of the General Minister, John Corriveau, in the Custody have convinced him more and more of the validity of this 'mission' and, consequently, of the need to maintain the presence of the Capuchin Order there at all costs. The most significant sign of this privileged attention of the Superiors of the Order can be seen in the availability of the Order itself when a new Apostolic Vicar was needed to succeed Msgr Gremoli. The appointment of Br. Paul Hinder, General Definitory, was a great sacrifice for the Order; but at the same time he was a great gift for the Vicariate of Arabia. At present ten Provinces have joined hands to continue the work that has been done up to now. It can be said that specifically for this characteristic of "multiprovincialism" of the brothers working in the new Viceprovince an even stronger witness of fraternal life is given to the christians who live there; and why not to the muslims. ●

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Drought and starvation
people fleeing away from famine



Kenya - "Garissa Town is attracting tens of thousands of people who are fleeing away from the rural zones because of drought and starvation and settling near the town". These words were stated by Msgr Paul Darmanin OFM Cap, Bishop of Garissa, which is 375 kms North-East of Nairobi. Garissa is the main town at the centre of the region that was hit by exceptional drought and starvation which is investing a great part of the Horn of Africa and above all the territories between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. "These are people who are accustomed to roam about according to the seasons", said the Bishop. "This year they are conscious that nowhere can they find water and pasture; consequently they move towards the towns, setting up their tents on the boundaries of the inhabited areas or on state-owned ground. The herds are disappearing and it would take years so that the people whose economy of survival is and guaranteed specifically by which their animals could recover. The scene is devastating and heart-breaking especially because everyone knows the proverb which in simple language states : "after the camels die, then it is the men who start dying". And the camels are already dying. In many areas of the diocese, especially in the north of Garissa, the situation is very serious. Now it is months that through the work of the parishes we have set up programmes of food distribution, especially of milk and maize, after having pointed out the localities which are in greater need. But the emergency continues to spread around and to extend further" concluded Bishop Paul. ●