



## Establishment of the Custody of Sweden

# DECREE

(Prot. N. 00204/03)

The history of the Capuchin presence in Sweden began in 1985 when the then General Minister, Br. Flavio Roberto Carraro, together with the General Definitory, meeting on January 30, 1985, decided to explore the possibility of implanting the Order in Scandinavian soil. In the month of May of the same year the General Definitory, Br. Pacyfik Antoni Dydcz, together with the Provincial Minister of Warsaw, Br. Kazimierz Synowczyk, paid a visit to Stockholm to meet Mgr. Hubertus Brandenburg, Bishop of the diocese in Stockholm, and to examine the situation at first hand. After that first meeting the Capuchin Order received an official invitation to settle in Sweden. The General Minister then proposed that the Province of Warsaw accept a presence in Sweden. This proposal was welcomed by the provincial chapter of the Province of Warsaw in the month of June 1985.

On October 8, 1986, with the obedience of the Provincial Minister, Br. Maksymilian Macioszek, Brs. Tomasz Nitkiewicz, Piotr Mucha and Jan Masłowski departed for Stockholm, staying in a house next to the cathedral church, and immediately began the study of the Swedish language.

Subsequently, with the loss of two of the first Capucins in Sweden, two other brothers came from Poland: Tomasz Wójcik and Józef Chrzanowski. They lived together with Br. Jan in Lidköping where the first Capuchin parish on Swedish soil was established on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1988. The religious house was canonically established on December 30, 1989 by a decree of the Provincial Minister, Br. Roman Kotowski. In 1996 this house was transferred to Skövde. In May 1994, thanks to the financial help of the Order, another house was bought in Stockholm with a view to the foundation of a new Capuchin Presence. The Provincial Chapter of 1994 voted to establish a house in the capital of Sweden, and this was done by the Provincial Minister Br. Kazimierz Synowczyk on April 9, 1995.

The Capuchin Presence in Sweden was not free from serious difficulty, related to the difficult cultural and religious context. After the canonical visit of the General Minister, Br. John Corriveau, and of the General Definitory, Br. Tadeusz Bargiel, which took place in July 1999, the Provincial Chapter of the year 2000 analysed the situation and decided to increase efforts for the development of this mission. For this purpose, in August 2000 a new foundation was approved in Göteborg-Angered and more brothers of the Province of Warsaw arrived there to strengthen the Capuchin presence. Currently it is constituted by ten brothers, all in perpetual vows: Józef Chrzanowski, Jan Masłowski, Jan Nowosielski, Andrzej Konopka, Marek Rubaj, Jarosław Daniluk, Mirosław Jankowski, Ryszard Zielinski, Wojciech Sugier and Sławomir Piłkuła.

During its meeting of October 7-10, 2002, held in Zakroczym, Poland, the CECOC Conference reflected on the immediate future of the Capuchin Presence in Sweden. The Conference recommended the establishment of a Delegation or Custody in accordance with the Constitutions (cf. Report of Br. Jure Šarčević, General Definitory, dated, 11 October 2002, Prot. N. 00830/02).

From 14 to 21 October 2002 Br. Jure Šarčević made a pastoral visit to his brothers in Sweden. During the visit, on 16-17 October 2002, a “chapter of mats” was held. There was a long discussion about the future of the Capuchins in Sweden, their commitments and apostolates. The “Swedish” brothers very positively appraised their mission, being convinced that the future of our presence appears good to a great extent. At present, pastoral commitments are largely limited to parish ministry, with assistance to various groups and religious congregations. Despite that the very low percentage of Catholics (only 1%) there exists a hope that an authentic Franciscan-Capuchin presence can attract vocations and contribute to the Implantation of the Order on Swedish soil.

The visit of the General Definitory in October 2002 had as its principal purpose to assess the prospects for the development of the Capuchin presence in Sweden and its possible elevation to a Delegation or Custody. The Visitor concluded that the best solution was to erect a Custody and all the brothers in Sweden unanimously supported this proposal.

In his letter of November 6, 2002 (Prot. N. 00877/02) the Provincial Minister of Warsaw, Br. Piotr Stasinski, requested the General Definitory to establish the Swedish Custody. At its meeting of November 28, 2002, the Definitory examined the request and expressed its consent for the institution of the new Custody.

Therefore,

**having obtained the consent of the General Definitory and in accord with the norms of Canon Law and of our Constitutions (cf. 111,1), we constitute and declare established the Custody of Sweden, dependent on the Province of Warsaw, with all the rights and obligations of the Custodies of our Order.**

The present decree will receive legal force on 6 April 2003, the day of its promulgation. The boundaries of the Custody will be the same national boundaries of the State of Sweden. The new Custody will proclaim the word of God under the patronage of our founder, St. Francis of Assisi.

We consider as members of the Custody of Sweden:

- all the brothers who, at the time of establishment, had an obedience to reside in its territory;
- all the brothers who will make their profession as members of this Custody.

In accordance with No. 111,4 of our Constitutions, having considered the consultative votes of the perpetually professed friars now serving in Sweden and with the consent of the General Definitory given during our meeting of 31 March 2003, we hereby appoint as Regular Superior and Councillors the following brothers:

Regular Superior:	<b>Br. Marek Rubaj</b>
First Councillor:	<b>Br. Jan Masłowski</b>
Second Councillor:	<b>Br. Andrzej Konopka</b>

Furthermore, all friars in perpetual vows belonging to the Custody of Sweden will participate in the first chapter of this Custody (cf. Constitutions 111,4) to be held within one year. It will be the task of the Chapter to discuss the life and of the testimony of these brothers and to prepare a Statute of the new Custody as well as to specify its capitular and electoral procedures.

On this occasion I earnestly desire to thank the Province of Warsaw for all its efforts in Sweden, in particular for the institution of this new circumscription. I congratulate the brothers of the new Custody, recommending them to the intercession of our Founder Saint Francis of Assisi who is chosen as patron and I invoke on them the abundance of the divine blessing.

Given in Rome, at our General Curia,  
March 31, 2003

br. Marek Przechowski  
General Secretary, OFMCap.

Br. John Corriveau  
General Minister, OFMCap.