

General Curia of the Capuchin Friars Minor

Via Piemonte 70 • 00187 ROME • ☎ +39 06 4620121 • 📠 +39 06 4828267 • www.ofmcap.org

Prot. 00358/03

April 10, 2003

LETTER OF CONVOCATION FOR THE SEVENTH PLENARY COUNCIL OF THE ORDER

To all the brothers of the Order:

The Lord give you peace!

On October 4, 2002, I announced to you the decision, made with the consent of the general definitory, to celebrate a plenary council of the Order on the theme of minority. In that announcement I referred to Circular Letter 20, and to the expressed desire of General Chapter 2000 to complement the Sixth Plenary Council, "On Poverty lived in Fraternity", with an added reflection on minority. I stated:

Both poverty and minority are rooted in *kenosis*. In keeping with the consensus of General Chapter 2000, the general definitory believes that the work of the Sixth Plenary Council would not be comprehensive without a systematic reflection on minority. For this reason, the general definitory intends to convoke a seventh plenary council of the Order to study minority and itinerancy in light of the theology of communion. A plenary council would be an appropriate setting for the Order to reflect on what the church's theology of communion contributes to our understanding of minority. It would also allow us to reflect on how our Franciscan tradition might enrich the church's understanding of communion (see Circular Letter 20, § 9).

The date and venue for PCO VII have already been established and announced to you. It will be celebrated in Assisi, March 1-27, 2004.

A preparatory commission, formed after consulting the conferences of the Order, is already at work and has appealed to the provinces and the brothers for their collaboration so that everyone might have an opportunity to make his contribution to our common reflection.

With the consent of the general definitory and in conformity with the prescriptions of our Constitutions (123, 1-8),

**I hereby convoke
the Seventh Plenary Council of the Order
to deal with the theme of
minority and itinerancy
as characteristics of our fraternal life.
The plenary council will be entitled:
Our fraternal life in minority.
*"As pilgrims and strangers in this world,
serving the Lord in poverty and humility..."(LR VI, 2).***

Our Constitutions (123, 2-4) list the following as members of the plenary council: the general minister, the general definitors, and the delegates of the conferences of major superiors. To their number the Plenary Council Statutes (n. 3) add the general secretary of the Order. The numerical proportion of delegates from the various conferences is determined by the general minister with the consent of his definitory. We have modified slightly the proportion determined for the last PCO in consideration of the merger of some of the conferences, as well as the numerical increase of friars in certain regions. The following table lists the number of delegates and their distribution:

Conference	Delegates
APEF Assemblée des provinciaux d'expression française (*)	1
ASMEN Assemblée des Supérieurs Majeurs Méditerranée Nord-Est	1
CCA Conferencia Capuchina Andina	2
CCB Conferência dos Capuchinhos do Brasil	3
CCMSI Capuchin Conference of Major Superiors in India	3
CECOC Conferentia Europæ Centro-orientalis OFM ^{Cap}	2
CIC Conferencia Ibérica de Capuchinos	2
CIMPCap Conferenza Italiana Ministri Provinciali Cappuccini	4
CONCAM Conferencia de Capuchinos de América Central y México	1
CONCAO Conferentia Capuccinorum Africae Occidentalis	2
EACC Eastern Africa Capuchin Conference	3
EECC European English-speaking Capuchin Conference	1
KDP Konferenz Deutschsprachiger Provinziale	2
NACC North American Capuchin Conference	2
PNVB Provincialen Nederlanden Vlaams België	1
SAPCC Southeast Asia Pacific Capuchin Conference	3

(*) In fact, by the time the delegates are to be chosen, APEF will no longer exist as a conference of the Order because the three provinces of which it was comprised will have been united into a single province. Nonetheless, since the reorganization of the European conferences, following the creation of the united Province of France, will not yet have been determined, the Province of France will enjoy the right which APEF enjoyed to designate a delegate.

With regard to eligibility to be a delegate, the Constitutions specify that it is not obligatory or necessary that delegates be actual conference members, that is, delegates need not be major superiors. The conferences will choose delegates with some competence in the subject matter being treated by the PCO and who are truly capable of representing the perspectives of the provinces of the conference with regard to the specific theme. The Plenary Council Statutes (n. 4) indicate that the conference should also designate a substitute for its delegate(s), so that, should the delegate(s) be unable to attend, the entire consultation process need not begin from scratch.

The names of the conference delegates must reach the general curia before September 1, 2003. It may not be possible for each conference to choose its delegate(s) before this deadline if it waits for one of its regularly scheduled meetings. If this be the case, it will be up to the conference president to arrange for a consultation of the conference members by whatever means he judges most suitable. The September 1st deadline must be adhered to rigorously. It is imperative that the delegates have sufficient time to prepare themselves, to familiarize themselves with the opinions of the provinces, and to participate in the process leading up to the PCO. That date is also important to allow sufficient time for the Preparatory Commission to adjust the process to the needs of the members of the PCO.

We suggest that you include with the name of each delegate, a brief biographical sketch, an indication of his specific fields of interest or competence, as well as which languages he is capable of using with ease. With the information you provide on the linguistic abilities of each delegate, the Preparatory Commission will take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that, without difficulty, each delegate will be able to follow the discussions and contribute to the work at hand.

The questions formulated by the Preparatory Commission have, thus far, been receiving a positive response from the circumscriptions of the Order. It is important that this collaboration

continue and increase, because a plenary council of the Order, in the words of the Constitutions (123, 1), “is intended to express the vital exchange between the whole fraternity and its central government, to promote an awareness of the corresponsibility and cooperation of all the brothers, and to foster unity and harmony in the pluriformity of the Order.” When one considers the goal enunciated in the Constitutions and the theme of PCO VII, it becomes clear that the Order is about to experience a significant moment in its history. That we be *minors* is what the world can expect of us and what the church expects of us for the world. The goal of this PCO is that we learn together how to be authentically “minor” in today’s diverse realities. I therefore encourage you, brothers, to courageously enter into the preparatory process of this PCO in order to profit as fully as possible from the recommendations that this PCO will propose to us.

May the Spirit of the Lord which revealed to Francis the purpose and path of his minority accompany us on our search for an ever greater fidelity to the gifts which we have received.

Br. John Corriveau, OFM Cap
General Minister

Br. Marek Przechowski, OFM Cap.
General Secretary