

Looking forward to a Ratio Formationis

“Pace e bene! Wishing you a pleasant time of renewal during this time of Easter!” – write Charles Alphonse and Jaime Rey, newly in charge of the SGF, on their blog. Beginning their service to the Order, they add: “Our General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri with his Definitory invites us again to form ourselves continuously in whatever way possible. We are called by them to reflect on the Formation Programme of the Order (Ratio Formationis) that we are to develop gradually within these six years. Along with that we would try to reach you through some of the animation programmes we are planning to have during this time. Some of our objectives are as follows: ‘Ratio Formationis’ preparations at different levels, conducting anima-



tion programmes (both for initial and ongoing formation, some in the respective conferences themselves), establishing contact with the formation houses and friars of the Order through the website, connecting with friars who are involved in special ministries around the globe, networking with the animation centres of the Order.

And here our Formation Office is ever ready to collaborate with you as were our predecessors Br. Rocco Timpano and Br. Marek Miszczyński in the past years. May God reward them!”

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Rotations in the General Curia

ROME, Italy – Br. Carlo Calloni, Appointed General Postulator beginning at Easter, moved to the house in Garbatella. The post of personal secretary of the General Minister has passed to Br. Massimo Rosina, up until now secretary for the Italian language. In his place, beginning in May, Br. Umberto Losacco, of the Province of Genoa, will begin his service in the General Curia as secretary for the Italian language.



New Blessed

VATICAN CITY – Our Order will soon be enriched by new blessed. On Wednesday, March 27, Pope Francis received in audience the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, during which he authorized the Congregation to promulgate decrees, among which is that of the martyrdom of Servant of God Andrew of Palazuelo, priest of the Order of Friars

Minor Capuchin, and his 31 companions, killed in odium fidei in Spain between 1936 and 1937. As explains Br. Alfonso Ramirez Peralbo, vice postulator, the cause of Br. Andrew of Palazuelo and companions is the result of five causes that were unified in the year 2000. Br. Andrew (civil name Miguel Francisco González González) belonged to the fraternity of Medinaceli in Madrid and was

killed together with five other friars from the same house (in the picture Br. Andrew is at the right, kneeling with the cross in his hand). Other Capuchin friars also sacrificed their lives in those years in witness to their faith: 6 from the friary of El Pardo, 7 in Antequera (Málaga), 7 in Gijón (Oviedo), 3 in Santander and 3 in Orihuela-Alicante.



I would like to share with you, dear brothers, my observations and my hope. Our presence in the area of the Flemish province of the Capuchins in Belgium began on September 15, 2010, and was the beginning of an interesting adventure.

A few words about Belgium

Belgium is a country with a rich Christian history, beautiful churches, and large friaries and monasteries. Today, however, after a flourishing 'Christian era,' it can all be considered, in a way, as a historical monument. The parish communities are very well organized from the point of view of administration and at the same do a lot for the poor, but as regards the sacramental life are faced with many difficulties for the lack of priests and a sharp decline in interest in the spiritual life. It is sad that the vast majority of believers are people 'advanced' in years. There is a clear decrease in the number of participants at Sunday Mass (about 3%). There is hope, however, especially because of the emergence of new communities. A few months ago I attended a 'little miracle' - the official opening of a YouFra community (29/9/2012), with national assistant Br. Kenny Brack, our current guardian in Antwerp, as the founder. It is a form of the Secular Franciscan Order for young people and is the first community of its kind in Belgium. During the solemn Eucharist, five young people made their first profession and another sixteen expressed the desire to enter the 'novitiate.' Also active are the communities of the Neocatechumenal Way, Sant'Egidio, Tiberias, and others.

A little history...

The Capuchin presence in Belgium began on October 13, 1585, when some friars belonging to the Province of Paris - John of Landen, Anthony of Ghent, and Joseph of Antwerp - under the leadership of Felix of Lampedona, arrived near Antwerp. This led to the establishment of two Provinces in Belgium, Flemish and Walloon, respectively, in 1616. At that time in the Flemish province, there were 18 friaries and 284 friars.

The Capuchins today

Currently in the Flemish province there are 7 fraternities and 56 friars. In Antwerp, we find ourselves in a community of ten brothers. The friary is in the center of the city, in 'the heart of the student life.' I dare say that from this point of view, it is one of the 'youngest' friaries in the world. In the friary church the Eucharist is celebrated every day and confession is available throughout the day. The Belgian friars welcomed us with great kindness and are open to our ideas. We feel their respect and their good will. They truly treat us like BROTHERS. For me it is a time to deepen my vocation, to rediscover the beauty of fraternity, but also to learn brotherhood. I have found marvelous brothers here who, through their way of life, witness to the Capuchin charism.

Antwerp is a city that presents many challenges, a city of thousands of people who need Christ. The brothers look to the future with hope and optimism; such is a clear proof of an international Capuchin fraternity coming to birth.

What is our work?

Our primary and earnest pastoral commitment is Eucharistic Adoration every Friday at 7 pm. We are very aware of the need to establish places of prayer. We want our church of St. Francis

to be an oasis of prayer, a place for beautiful and dignified liturgy and - as it is today - the sacrament of Reconciliation. Even though our knowledge of the Flemish language isn't perfect, we still do pastoral work in our church, give a hand in the nearby parish and



by Marcin Derdziuk, OFM Cap

A letter from Antwerp

Polish Capuchins
in the country of French fries, chocolate, and diamonds

are committed to the youth communities.

Antwerp is a city that is more than 55% immigrant; among these about 15,000 are Polish. After discernment, we began a ministry for them at our friary. We take care of coordinating catechesis and religious education in the Polish School of Antwerp; we have a singing group and pastoral groups like Family Oasis and Youth Oasis; there are altar servers and lectors;

and we assist spiritually at an Alcoholics Anonymous group. At the friary there is also a Spanish Mass group.

The Plan

As Capuchins we want to bring Jesus to the people, sharing with them what we ourselves have received from him. With eagerness we await reinforcements and we entrust ourselves to your prayers.



The Kurupira Project including music, volleyball, and martial arts



SANTO ANTÔNIO DO IÇÁ, Brazil – In the month of March, in the Capuchin parish of St. Santo Antonio do Içá, activities of the Kurupira Project have begun for the second time, with good news. For the musical activities, guitar has been added to courses in violin, keyboard, drums, and singing. In sport, futsal has now become a reality along with volleyball and handball, not to mention that the number signed up for karate has quadrupled since last year. In keeping with the public health society, the friars responsible have affiliated themselves with city's office of health and all the young people and children will have medical and dental check-ups. The good program last year has awakened the interest of children and

young people, leading to an increase in the number of participants. There are more than five hundred signed up, distributed as follows: 24 for singing, 157 for violin, 9 for guitar, 85 for keyboard, 67 for drums, 111 for volleyball, 17 for futsal, 58 for handball, and 175 for martial arts. With the Lord's blessing, the Project continues to carry out its work of offering to children and young people a chance for a healthy and happy life.

The Project started in a quiet way with the participation of little more than twenty children and adolescents; today, at one year of operation, the project includes more than four hundred people, including children, adolescents, young people, and adults. Although the Project has as its aim to work with children and adolescents who use drugs or who are victims of sexual abuse, the family is considered fundamental and without doubt it is a contribution to the future to offer the members of families a way to abandon vices (alcohol and drugs) and to make socialization and the learning of a new profession possible for them through courses offered within the Kurupira project.

III Chapter of the Provinces of northern Italy

VARIGOTTI, Italy – The third area Chapter of the definitories of the northern Italian Provinces was held from April 8 to 11, 2013 at Varigotti (Savona), with the presence of Br. Štefan Kožuh, General Vicar, and Br. Matteo Siro, secretary of CIMPCap. In a frank and sincere atmosphere, the meeting reaffirmed the shared desire to continue fraternal collaboration among the various provinces concerned and to carry out, in the foreseeable future, the union, on the one hand, of the Provinces of Piedmont and Alexandria (2014), and of Trent and Venice on the other.

Following the General Vicar's talk on the path of the Order and on the expectations and/or proposals that concern that Capuchins of northern Italy, a discussion began that then flowed into taking hold of the vision of the 'Georgia Project,' beginning with a video sent from the first two friars who have been in Georgia since March 19. This new presence, entrusted 'in solidum' to all the Capuchin provinces of northern Italy under the direct responsibility of Emilia-Romagna, also requires the active involvement of all the other Provinces.

'The heart' of the Chapter, it could be said, was the discussion of initial for-

mation, ongoing formation, and evangelization. Through the dynamics of group work and plenary sessions, some precise guidelines and concrete choices emerged, above all for initial formation. The choice for a single post-novitiate for all of northern Italy, already active in Milan for two years, was confirmed. It was also decided that beginning with the triennium 2014-2017, there will be a single novitiate house, to be established in Piedmont. Also in the areas of ongoing formation and evangelization points of connection were found which will certainly open up other prospects for further common efforts, looking already beyond national borders, not only to the east (Georgia), but also toward northern Europe.



Silver jubilee and priestly ordinations in Angola

LUANDA, Angola - On Sunday, April 14, 2013, in the church of Our Lady of Fátima, four priests were ordained by the laying on of hands of Bishop Anastácio Kahango, auxiliary of Luanda: Fernando de Lemos Nzumba K. Kanduanga, Roboão Mona João, Silva António, and Afonso Cahunda Bige. In the same celebration the 25th anniversary of the Viceprovince was remembered (1988-2013). At the time of the Profession of Faith, all the friars present renewed their religious vows. In his homily, Bishop Anastácio spoke to the four priestly ordinandi and also about the 25 years of the Viceprovince's foundation, with the hope that it would walk towards the future with fidelity and commitment.

The Refectory of Solidarity at Osorno

OSORNO, Chile - In the parish of St. Leopold Mandic, in these days of Easter, the daily lunch for about fifty people who live in precarious conditions has begun. Several community groups are committed to offering each day the necessary service to realize this important work in our parish. The generosity of many people makes it possible that, day by day, food is available to give energy and strength to the many people who come daily to our open refectory.

The "Manhã Franciscana" program on 'Web Rádio Capuchinhos' dot com

RECIFE, Brazil - Every Tuesday from 9 to 10:30 am, Br. Tiago Santos OFM Cap is on the "Manhã Franciscana" program on 'Web Rádio Capuchinhos' (www.webradiocapuchinhos.com). Don't forget to listen to this Franciscan message of peace and good!

The growth of the OFS in Africa

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast – On April 14-19, 2013, CONCAO met at Abidjan. Br. Amanuel Mesgun ofmcap, General Assistant to the OFS, also took part. Br. Amanuel gave a conference on the meaning of "Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance" according to the new "Statutes for Assistance to the OFS-YouFra" of 2009, also referring to other new legislative texts such as: the Rule of 1978, the General Constitutions of 2000, and the Ritual of 1985, in order to illustrate that the OFS is a truly autonomous Order, though not totally independent. He explained that Assistance today has a new method and a new conception of the OFS and must be animated by the "reciprocal and living communion" that characterizes the rapport between the First, Second, and Third Franciscan Orders. On April 18, the General Minister and Assistant had a fraternal dialogue with the 'St. Louis' local fraternity of the OFS that is assisted by the Capuchins of the St. Pio Spirituality Center. The national OFS Fraternity of Ivory Coast is an emerging fraternity made up of 54 members divided into 4 local fraternities: three fraternities assisted by the OFM and one by the Capuchin friars.

Syria: The church of the Capuchins in Deir Ezzor is destroyed

SYRIA – A violent explosion burned to the ground the church and friary of the Capuchin friars in Deir Ezzor, in Mesopotamia. Br. Antoine Haddad, the Viceprovincial who oversees the Capuchin presence in Lebanon and Syria received the information. The explosion happened on April 15. “It was the only church in Deir Ezzor that had remained intact until now.” It isn’t clear how it came to be destroyed. According to some reconstructions, a breach was opened in the church and some opposition fighters stationed themselves there. The regular army would then have hit the church, knocking it down. Others speak of a car bomb placed next to the building. Br. Antoine Haddad, with great sadness, said, “this is all hate and desecration.” In the area—he lets us know—“there are no more Christians.” In the past months, given the critical situation, “our two friars who lived in the friary left Deir Ezzor with the sisters of Mother Teresa and the ten or so seniors who lived with us. They were the last remaining Christians. I thank the Lord that the two friars are safe and sound. The church of stone can be rebuilt one day, when a springtime of peace appears in the Middle East.” Deir Ezzor is a city in the east of Syria, beyond the Euphrates, between Palmyra and the Iraqi border. “Our presence goes back to the 30s of the last century, but we have been in the Middle East much longer than that. In almost four centuries of history, our Viceprovince has suffered various destructions and persecutions, but has always risen, with the Risen Christ.” Another community of Capuchins still remains in southern Syria, at Al-Suwayda—still quiet for the moment—where there are two friars.

Catholic church burned in Canada

KELOWNA, Canada – In the diocese of Nelson, in British Columbia, while all the priests were gathered around their bishop, John Coriveau OFMCap, for the Chrism Mass on March 25, 2013, someone set fire to the church of St. Rita in Castlegar, located 46 km from the cathedral of Nelson where the Mass was being celebrated. The fire completely destroyed the church and what was in it... police investigations are underway. “We have no idea of the motives for this criminal act” – writes Br. Matthieu Gombo Yange OFMCap, of the St. Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer in Kelowna.

What Mission for the future?

MILAN, Italy - More than 20 friars and lay collaborators from the different mission offices in northern Italy met in Milan on April 10. After the presentation of Br. Helmut Rakowski “What Mission for the future?” the discussion went around the present challenges for the mission offices. The financial crisis in Italy affects also the people close to us Capuchins and to our mission. (30% of the youth is jobless. Taxes have increased and the salary of those who still have a job is often not enough to reach the end of the month. In the Capuchin soup kitchen in Milan more and more Italians join the immigrants for a daily meal.) The Mission offices have seen the offerings for the mission work dropping to nearly zero. Only project oriented fundraising find some response, especially if the projects deal with children. Formation and maintenance for the Capuchins in the South is in danger.

New ways of convincing people to help us helping were discussed and also the need for our brothers in the South to find new sources of income

in their own countries. The next Plenary Council of the Order about “work” will hopefully deal with this challenge. Also a new way of mission with less and smaller institutions but more personal involvement has to come. Br. Alejandro Nuñez presented himself as the new Promoter of Solidarity. Coming himself from a country in the South that was used to receive help, he underlined that there is always a way to become more independent. He stated, that the international Solidarity of the Order needs the contribution of all friars and there is a big challenge now for the South.

As some provinces in Italy are preparing to merge, the way of how to organize in this process the work for the missionary activity was also discussed.

The Mission secretariat of Milan conducted interviews with some of the participants. The videos in Italian will be published during the next time on their YouTube channel, where you can find also other witnesses from missionaries and volunteers: missioni-puntoorg



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Appointment of General Secretary of the Prayer Groups of Padre Pio



SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO, Italy - During the visit of Archbishop Michele Castoro to the friars gathered in Provincial Assembly at the ‘Approdo’ welcome center at San Giovanni Rotondo, it was officially announced that Br. Carlo M. Laborde had been appointed General Secretary of the Prayer Groups of Padre Pio and that Br. Antonio Belpiede had been appointed coordinator for foreign groups.