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## The Grace of Working PCO VIII Called

Dear brothers, with joy and living hope I convoke the VIII Plenary Council of the Order, with the theme *The Grace of Working, at Assisi, at our friary “Cristo Risorto” from 26 October to 21 November, 2015...* Thus the General Minister, Br. Mauro Jöhri, in the circular letter of November 1, 2013, called the next Plenary Council of the Order.

In continuity with the last two PCOs, “Living Poverty in Brotherhood” and “Our Fraternal Life in Minority,” the General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri opens the new PCO, leading us back to listening to the word and above all the example of our father St. Francis, for whom work is a grace granted by the Lord such that all the friars might not “extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion.” The words of the Poverello, which speak in the Rule and Testament of the grace, importance, and joy of work, place the emphasis on the theme of working without having a recompense from the efforts carried out.

It is necessary in this moment that the whole Order reflect on the new challenges that, coming from the problems regarding the transformation of work and of its significance on the global level, involve also our pastoral activity and its obvious diminishment and consequences for our basic needs.

From the time of questing to our day, the General Minister continues, touching on his own life, a relatively brief time, but a time in which the link was lost that marked our Capuchin history in the world, an emblematic “secret agreement” between those who gave

Br. Francisco Lopes OFMCap.

and the friars who prayed “for” and “with” the people.

We are not easily identified with the needs of material support and the people no longer feel an urgent need for our spiritual support.

What to do and how to do it? This is the challenge presented to us by the new PCO! The path suggested by the Minister will always be the way of sharing in fraternal life the little and the much that each friar receives for his service: *In*

*the face of these changes we cannot remain passive with idle hands; in every part of the world we are called to ask ourselves how we intend to support ourselves. The fundamental criterion that must guide our reflection and that I wish to affirm here with force and clarity is this: the work of the individual friar must be in harmony with the primacy of the fraternal life...*

We must never tune out of our true and authentic identity as friars of the people, characterized - beyond being inscribed in the official list of Mendicant Orders - by the fraternal life in community, even in today's waves of globalization and materialism.

To realize this journey on the grace of working, there is nothing more concrete to count on than a small fraternity to help prepare for the next Plenary Council. A working group with the aim of the greatest participation possible is fitting for this event.



The friars called together to take part in the Preparatory Commission are:

- Br. Štefan Kožuh, (General Vicar, President);
- Br. Hugo Mejía Morales (Gen. Def., Vice President);
- Br. Francisco Lopes (PR Ceará Piauí, Brazil, Secretary).

Members:

- Br. Giovanni Battista Urso (PR Calabria, Italy);
- Br. Mark Joseph Costello (PR Calvary, USA);
- Br. Moses Njoroge Mwangi (VG Kenya, Africa);
- Br. Nithiya Sagayam (PR Tamil Nadu Nord, India).

“Let us support one another and remind one another that the Grace of the Lord supports and accompanies our life and our work. May each of us, with our gaze turned to Christ and to Francis, do his own part.” So be it!

The new academic year has just begun at our International College ‘San Lorenzo da Brindisi’ in Rome.

The current rector, Br. Isidor, presents the College: “The International College ‘San Lorenzo da Brindisi’ is a first-level formative and cultural institution of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, with the aim of helping to deepen and transmit the Franciscan-Capuchin tradition and promote the better formation of future generations of Capuchin friars. It is certainly the most numerous and multicultural fraternity of the whole Order, welcoming friars from all the circumscriptions that they might attend the various Pontifical Universities in Rome. The College was founded in 1908 with a first location on via Boncompagni in Rome, near the

that all feel like brothers as they seek to share life every day. I have been here for five months. Since coming here, I have not found great difficulty; all the brothers have welcomed me with kindness. The College gives us the chance to know the reality of the Order in its broadness; here we have the possibility of hearing about what happens in the countries from which we come (...) and to share it together. But I have just begun to think of the future. If you ask me what I will do after, the priority will be our young men in seminary and our friars in formation. I think that it is necessary to give a good formation to the young people in order to have a good future in my Viceprovince. If the friars pray well, if they prepare the liturgy well, they will do all other things well; for a prayer

an opportunity to give thanks for the gift of the vocation to Franciscan fraternity. Br. Carlos describes this gratitude: “I feel that I have to thank the Lord and my brothers very much! For, even if the studies are our current and specific goal, the life here is not limited to academic knowledge or to seeking a degree, but makes us grasp the primacy of the fraternal life and this would not be possible without the closeness of the brothers that live here together. All the support of those who serve in this house, of the rector, the professors, and classmates is essential to build one family. Thank you very much for the opportunity you have given me to live this experience!”

Indonesia – Br. Alexander Silaen – Islamic Studies (Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies)

Our student confreres at the International College tell us about:

## THE GRACE OF STUDYING IN ROME!

Br. Francisco Lopes, OFM Cap.

General Curia. It was then moved to the current complex on the Grande Raccordo Anulare on the occasion of the General Chapter of 1968. The structure includes other central institutions of the Order: The Central Library, the General Archives, the Historical Institute and the Franciscan Museum.”

BICI has gathered the experiences of three “student brothers,” belonging to different continents and realities, who want to share a little of the richness of their experiences on the grace of studying in Rome in order to acquire different skills in the intellectual and cultural fields.

Angola: Br. Silva Antonio – Sacred Music (Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music)



Before coming to Rome, Br. Silva often worked with the youth and also in vocation ministry and with the OFS. He explains why his superiors sent him to study music: “I think they chose me both because I like music and because I was always active in the music ministry for the celebrations of religious profession and priestly ordination. My superiors, having therefore thought to send me to study music both in order to help with the musical formation of our seminarians and friars and because for our celebrations there was no one thus prepared.

He describes the way the fraternal life is lived in Rome in the large and diverse fraternity of the International College ‘San Lorenzo da Brindisi’: “Our College, beyond the studies, offers a beautiful experience of Capuchin life. Here we have the possibility of experiencing fraternity in a universal way. It is a unique experience to find oneself among such a diversity of culture, language; people coming from different parts of the world but

done well disposes us beautifully for the other things.”

Peru: Br. Carlos Piccone Camere – Church History (Pontifical Gregorian University)



Having already worked in Peru in the “Ciudad de Los Niños” and as formator, missionary pastor and also provincial secretary, now Br. Carlos begins his course of studies at the Gregorian in Church History, for, according to him: “To study the history of the Church is to shed light on her present: the events that have marked the past offer various lessons that remain valid. Many of the crises that our society faces require a vision that is broad, critical, and integrated with history in order to understand and analyze them with honesty. The fact of living in Rome, the center of Christian culture, presents itself as a further grace.

Even more, the opportunity that the Order offers in the multicultural environment of the College presents richness and challenges to one who gives himself to this academic adventure. On this, Br. Carlos continues: “The International College is a reality sui generis in the Order. As friars from the whole world, we incarnate the inter-culturality and pluriformity but without a doubt we share the same charism. I believe, however, that there exists the risk, in some way, of becoming alienated, forgetting these same roots or distancing ourselves from our Franciscan charism. In this horizon, we must constantly seek balance, enriching ourselves from the evocative and fraternal field that this stage offers us, even as an opportunity to assert ourselves. Pluriformity is laborious, but it is an opportunity without parallel to appreciate how we can incarnate the Gospel in the various cultures of our nations of origin.

And as an image of this great Capuchin family spread throughout the world, life as a student in Rome is also

Br. Alexander Faustinus Silaen, of the Province of Medan, Indonesia, is pursuing a path that few friars know: studying the world of Islam. Living in a country of Muslim majority, in an area where being Christian continues to mean struggling for the faith, he explains to us his mission in this world, little or unknown in the West: “On the last day of April 2011 the Provincial sent me to Rome to study Islam, saying that we needed to know Islam in order to dialogue with the Muslims as part of our work and mission as Franciscans and Capuchins. But he had another motive for sending me here, the fact that the St. John Institute of Theology and Philosophy, where almost all of the Capuchins of Indonesia are formed, needed a new professor of Islamic Studies. To be frank, at first I refused to study Islam because it isn't easy for me to tolerate Muslims. Why? Because, to make a long story short, the parish where I was working does not have a church because the Muslims don't allow it. There are 8000 faithful without a church!



The languages, the cultures, the nations: “Beyond the spoken languages of Indonesia I had to learn English better, then Italian, and now it is indispensable to know Arabic, the real base of this course. For this I went to Egypt for a year in Cairo where I studied the language of the Koran at the Dar Comboni Institute for Arabic Studies. There were 25 hours of languages and 4 hours of Islam a week! Now in Rome, at the PISAI I am continuing the license with more hours of Islamic Studies but the Arabic language is always the dominant material. Arabic is very difficult: the alphabet, pronunciation, and grammar... But in the Institute in Rome the classes are in Arabic and I continue to struggle to understand well what the professors say. I

would like to know better the history of Islam and to learn interreligious dialogue, also because the majority of the materials can be found in English and these will be very useful for my future work. I think that in the end I will teach Islamic Studies in our Institute in Indonesia, but I worry about how to make a bridge between

Christians and Muslims for I don't know what to do or how to do it. But Indonesia and the Church need people of dialogue and for this I must do more. This is the motivation that makes me content to study Islam and for this I thank our Capuchin Order!"

## Appointments for the General Curia

ROME, Italy – From the last Ordinary meeting of the General Definitory (16-27 September 2013), came new appointments for the Fraternity of the General Curia, which continues to renew itself: **Br. Antonio Belpiede** (PR Foggia, Italy) will be the new General Procurator beginning in the new year 2014; **Br. Albert D'Souza** (PR Maharashtra, India)

is the new Vice-General Procurator, and **Br. Aklilu Petros** (VG Ethiopia) is the Secretary for International Economic Solidarity. These last two assumed their positions in October 2013. To the brothers leaving and those taking on these appointments, our thanks and best wishes for a fruitful mission!



Albert D'Souza

Aklilu Petros

Antonio Belpiede

## Chad and Central African Republic: 75 Anniversary of Capuchin Presence

MONDOU, Chad – The 75th Anniversary of the arrival of the Capuchins in Chad and the Central African Republic was marked and commemorated by a solemn Eucharist in the Cathedral of Mondou (South Chad) on October 20, with the local ordinary, Most Rev. Joachim Kouraleyo Tarounga, presiding and concelebrated by Rosario Ramolo, the Capuchin bishop of Goré (Chad), and about forty priests. The event was preceded by a week of prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and conferences. Witness and present in the celebration was Br. Michel Guimbaud, 82 years old, who arrived in Chad in 1957 and is one of the few remaining of the pioneers of the mission. Another im-

portant name is that of Br. Arthur Delepine, who founded the mission and Cathedral of Mondou in 1941 while still a young priest of 25 years. It was there, at his own work, that the celebration was carried out. Having died, consumed by exhaustion after only 4 years of missionary work at the age of 29, his sacrifices have borne the fruit - in 2 African countries - of 8 dioceses: Berberati, Bossangoa, Bouar (Central African Republic); Moundou, Sarh, Doba, Lai and Goré (Chad), besides a host of 324 friars coming from France, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, Argentina, Peru, Slovenia, and Poland to follow in his footsteps in these 75 years. (ZENIT)

## Constitutions approved by the Holy See

ROME, Italy - On October 22 it was communicated to our General Minister that the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life had received and approved the changes made to the text of our Constitutions during the last General Chapter and presented to the same Dicastery three months ago. We receive this good news with great joy and await the definitive publication of the new complete text.



## Meeting of the International Commission of Economic Solidarity

ROME, Italy – The International Commission of Economic Solidarity met at our International College from 10 to 16 October. The first part of the meeting concerned the Project Managers, who evaluated and studied the requests and projects arriving at the commission, principally those regarding the fields of formation and social ministry. After this the 20 members of the commission, led by Br. Pio Murat, General Definitory, met for a further three days and deliberated the feasibility of the requests. The General Minister, Br. Mauro Jöhri, recalled in his talk the great responsibility of these decisions as an important service to the whole order, which, because of the diminishment of resources, currently receives more requests than can be responded to positively. There was also occasion to thank and recognize Br. Mark S'Souza, who is leaving this important service after 13 years of careful dedication to the projects of economic solidarity.

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## Blessed Angela of Foligno a Saint

VATICAN CITY – On October 9, 2013, Pope Francis received the report of His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and extended to the Universal Church the liturgical veneration of Blessed Angela of Foligno (c. 1248 – 4 January 1309) of the Secular Franciscan Order, inscribing her in the catalogue of the Saints.

Special  
FRANCIS AT FRANCIS



## The "Oi@" Project Collecting abandoned computer equipment

**L**UANDA, Angola – “You must be the change you want to see in the world.” – With these words written on the brochure, the Capuchins of the “Centro de Formação São Domingos” in Luanda seek to form and inform the local community about a new and problematic phenomenon now spreading throughout the whole world: what to do with computer equipment that is no longer needed, that is to say, electronic waste. A large number of computers, in fact, are set aside each year because of technological innovation or simply because their usefulness has expired. What to do with these objects? In the “Centro São Domingos” the friars gather all these thrown-out electronics in order to try to recover them for the benefit of social projects for the neediest communities, creating not only a useful purpose for what was already thrown out, but above all offering an opportunity for social involvement, especially for the new generations. And what doesn’t make a return to use goes into the “Computer Museum.” The project also aims to understand where the computers come from, of what materials they are made and what they are

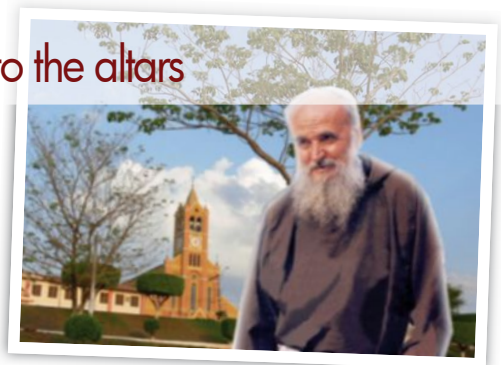
for, and what purpose could be served by our electronic equipment that becomes inevitably obsolete. To release into the environment a piece of lead, for example, would be more detrimental than a simple loss of money, because it causes grave pollution. Given this, the project thinks, for example, of the whole life cycle of the computer, in accordance with the concept of a “Green Computer”: energy saving, using only the toner strictly necessary, printers, recycled paper, etc. The idea would be to also involve the business and corporate world that consumes on a much larger scale and distributes an immense quantity of these products. The opportunity to help with or to learn about this very Franciscan initiative is open to all who are interested.

For further information contact Br. Joaquim Hangalo:

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## Br. Alberto Beretta: new stage on the way to the altars

**B**ERGAMO, Italy – This past 11 September, in the church of Santo Alessandro in Caturra, in Bergamo, Bishop Francesco Beschi celebrated the solemn Eucharist for the closing of the diocesan phase of the Process for Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Br. Alberto Beretta, Capuchin missionary of the Province of Lombardy. Br. Albert, a doctor and missionary in Brazil for a good 32 years, is also the brother of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, who was herself a pediatrician.



## + Br. Ignacio Larrañaga OFM<sup>Cap</sup>

Our brother Ignacio Larrañaga passed to the heavenly Father in Guadalajara (Mexico) in the midst of his tireless pastoral work on the morning of October 28, 2013. Thus concluded a life dedicated to implanting the living and true God in people’s hearts.

Br. Ignacio Larrañaga is the author of 17 books, translated in more than 10 languages. Among the most important are “Show Me Your Face,” “Brother Francis of Assisi,” “The Poor One of Nazareth,” “Psalms for Life,” “The Silence of Mary,” “From Suffering to Peace: Toward Inner Freedom,” “The Happy Marriage,” and his own spiritual autobiography, “The Fire and the Rose.”

