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Conclusion of the Year of Faith Open wide the door of faith, share the 'gospel of joy'

Close a door symbolically? The preparatory commission for the closure of the Year of Faith was looking for a sign. Something meaningful. But surely not the closing of a door. "The 'door of faith' is always open," Benedict XVI had written in his letter "Porta fidei" that announced this special year. The signs chosen for the closure of the year of faith on November 23 and 24 point to this continuity. The meeting of Pope Francis with the catechumens and the acceptance of some candidates into the catechumenate speaks of the transmission of the faith, as does equally the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium," the first official document of Pope Francis, dedicated to evangelization. Among those who received a copy from the hands of the Holy Father as representatives of all the faithful was a German novice of the Capuchin Poor Clares in Assisi, Sister Maria Philomena.

Fifty years after the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict wished for a special year, intending to lift up in all believers "the aspiration to profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope." (Porta fidei 9) From 11 October 2012, the 50th anniversary of opening of the Council, until the Solemnity of Christ the King on 24 November 2014, the Year of Faith was celebrated, which also recalled the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church 20 years ago. The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization with its president, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, was responsible for

coordinating the year and organizing its activities together with the Pope. Ten major events were prepared, some with 200,000 participants. Confirmation, ecclesial movements, seminarians and religious in formation, catechists, confraternities and families were some of the groups and realities invited on the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter to confess together their faith. Other activities, for example, included a 'solemn adoration' at the global level and the Marian day with the arrival in Rome of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. The abdication of Pope Benedict XVI on February 28, 2013 and the scandals before it seemed to be obstacles to the Year of Faith that he wanted. But many people were touched, and those who came to see Papa Ratzinger in his last public appearances grew considerably. The conclave and the election of the new Pope would have always brought more people to the piazza of St. Peter's. Pope Francis beat all the records up to now. It was surely him who was the center of the great events of the Year of Faith, nevertheless always putting the accent not on himself but rather on Christ. There were more than eight million pilgrims this year. Part of their pilgrimage was the visit to the tomb of Peter and the profession of the Creed. The Year of Faith concluded officially on November 24. But in reality it is only a beginning, a reinforcement for the faith, a renewal, an opportunity to find anew the precious pearl and the hidden treasure that now we must share with all as the "gospel of joy."



Br. Helmut Rakowski OFMCap.
Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization

Ordinary meeting of the General Definitory

ROME, Italy – The ordinary meeting of the General Definitory was held from November 18 to 22, 2013. Among other things, the date was set for the promulgation and the entering into effect of the Constitutions and the Ordinances of the General Chapters, recently approved by the Holy See: it will be 8 December 2013 when the official Italian text will be published on our website. The translations in other languages will have to be approved the General Minister and his Council.

In the area of International Economic Solidarity, subsidies for the missions, for formation, and for various projects to be realized in 2014 were approved.

In addition, another brother was called to fraternal service in the General Curia: Br. Marcello Gasparin of the Province of Rio Grande do Sul, who will arrive in Rome in spring 2014.



The possibility to gather as brothers is a reality. The meeting with 'the other' who comes from a distant country, with a different language, culture, and thought, is possible because this 'other' is my brother.

The meeting and fraternal living-together of the brothers of the three branches of the Franciscan First Order was a dream come true during the Inter-Franciscan Formation Course

During the various sessions of formation, both the animators and the participants interacted, reflecting on missionary activities according to their areas and contexts. Brothers with missionary experience in Japan, India, Australia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, showed the greatness of being a missionary and the challenge living it brings in our days. Among the treasures that were found was highlighted the

Jesus for the world which can continue to be passed on by our style of fraternal life, open and available.

This course is itself part of the joyful announcement that comes from the Gospel: Yes, it is possible to live, work, and serve together, thanks to the Franciscan charism. Once the formation in Italy is concluded, each friar will return to his own reality with more tools for working and carrying out his mission-

Franciscan interchange for mission in the world

"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy..." (Lk 2, 10-11)

*Br. Angel Mauricio Mora, OFMCap
Viceprovince "San Felix de Cantalicio"
of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama*



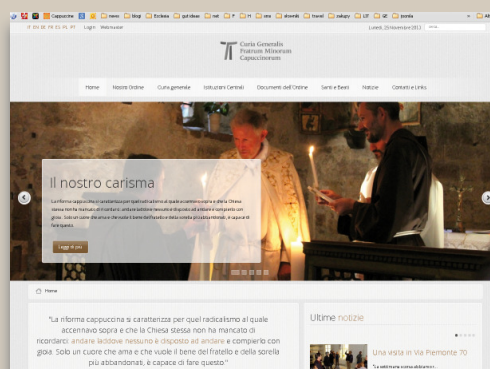
held in Brussels, Belgium, over three months (September, October, November). In this period, Capuchin, Conventual, and OFM friars experienced the fraternal life, sharing their missionary experience and preparing themselves to carry out mission, announcing the joy that is the presence of Christ showing forth in the life of each.

necessity to show gospel unity to the world, presenting ourselves as Franciscans of the same family. And this has its foundation - in a world divided by economic interest, by social contexts where individualism and consumerism rule, divided by fundamentalism and religious extremism - the good news of

ary service. The great evangelical sign, however, has already been manifested and we desire that it should continue to manifest itself: the Franciscan charism is one, and the legacy of Francis of Assisi is strengthened when the friars live together and also share the mission together.

New website ofmcap.org

ROME, Italy – a new website for the Order is being prepared by the Office of Communications. Additions will be made to the current site in some parts, especially in the news section, but it will no longer be updated. The new site, beyond the public page visible to all,



will offer various levels of access for Capuchin friars and ministers. This will be a tool for direct contact with the General Curia, with its various offices and Central Institutions of the Order, but also for an array of resources, documents, circular letters and links, useful for the animation of our Capuchin fraternity. We hope the site will be online in spring 2014.

Refugee camp in the Capuchin student house

BOUAR, Central African Republic – Groups of vigilantes commonly called the anti-Balaka (anti-machete) - because of the weapons of war and the machetes provided for them - tired of the executions of Seleka, attacked their position on the morning of Saturday, 26 October in Bouar, Central African Republic, a city 450 km from the Capital, Bangui. The anti-balakas were estimated to be 4,000 men according to the commander of the Bouar military region. Using light and heavy firearms they pushed the population to fight around the airport and the military camp. There is not fighting in the city, thankfully.

From the first shot, the people fled to seek refuge in the cathedral, where there are now around 6000 people, and in our student house of Saint Laurent, where at least 1500 have found refuge. They are under porches, in the garages, under the mango trees, in the newly built chapel, above and below the containers, wherever they can find space. The brothers are overwhelmed by the situation because our house was not

designed to accommodate so many people. However, Brothers Toussein and Piotr are trying to organize the people in groups so that the situation can be managed better.

A small unit of FOMA (the military force of Central Africa) is ensuring the security of our house in order to protect the displaced population. We opened our house to the people because they chose to come to us on their own. It is also our way of being near to them and sharing with them their moment of trial. The city still lives in fear and rumors of every kind, because things are not yet clear. This fear was compounded by the departure of NGOs from the city. The people are not ready to go home. It concerns us whether they will receive humanitarian aid. We hope that things return to normal quickly.

May the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Peace, patroness of the Viceprovince of Chad-Central African Republic, protect us and intercede for peace in our country.



A prestigious recognition for a Genovese Capuchin Friar

GENOVA, Italy – Father Carlo Vigilio Toso, a Capuchin friar of the Province of Genoa, already a distinguished professor of African history at the political science faculty of the University of Genoa and author of twenty-seven scientific publications, after receiving numerous awards during his writing and teaching career, among them a good three times the 'Culture Prize' of the Council of the Presidency of the Ministers of Italy, on this past May 8 in Paris was unanimously elected a member of the Accadémie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer.

On the occasion, this past June 27, Prof. Toso was invited to give a communication sur le thème des: Expériences d'études et de recherches

and then, as distinguished researcher of African studies, was awarded by the honorary president Jacques Serre, the honor of membership in the Accadémie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, to which have also been elected some presidents of the French Republic, Kings Albert I and Leopold III of Belgium, Prince Albert of Monaco, heads of state and government, the Senegalese poet and president Leopold Sedar Senghor, French academics and illustrious persons from the world of politics, science, and culture.

Highlighted: The medallion of honor. In relief, the four words said to be the principles of the Accadémie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer: *Savoir, comprendre, respecter, aimer*.

Meeting of the International Formation Council

The General Secretariat of Formation (SGF), coordinated by Br. Charles Alphonse and Br. Jaime Rey, held a meeting of the members of the International Formation Council from November 4-9 in Frascati.

With a talk by the General Minister, Br. Mauro Jöhri and the General Definitor for formation, Br. Sérgio Dal Moro, at least 19 friars coming from 13 areas of the Order came together to reflect on the plan of the Secretariat for the next sexennium. Among the themes was the first discussion to plan for the Ratio Formationis of the Order and other topics pertinent to the field of formation.

Meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences

FRASCATI, Italy – The meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences has concluded, held at Frascati from this past 13 to 15 November. Thirteen Presidents participated, together with the General Minister and Definitory, who took up the most pressing topics for the life of the Order. These are some of the themes that were on the agenda: Redistribution of some Conferences of the Order – Fraternal Collaboration between Circumscriptions – Economic Solidarity and paths toward self-support – PCO VIII: ideas and proposals for the working group – Guidelines for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults – Practical application of the renewed Constitutions and Ordinances – Development of a Ratio formationis for the Order.

The participants also visited the construction site of our Curia in via Piemonte in Rome, to see the state of the work and the solutions adopted for the renovation of the building. The architect, Mr. Franco Quaranta, together with the contractor, Mr. Carlo Mannelli and the General Bursar, Br. Luis Eduardo Rubiano, led the guided visit.





VI Meeting "Pro dialogo"

ISTANBUL, Turkey – The VI Meeting 'Pro Dialogue', organized by the International Franciscan Center for Dialogue (CEFID) together with the Custody of the East and of the Holy Land of the Friars Minor Conventual, was held from November 4 to 9, 2013. Twenty-two friars participated from various Conventual Provinces. The theme of the meeting was: "The life of the believer in God: a path of fidelity and sacrifice." Various conferences and talks followed that allowed the friars to know Islam 'from the inside' and to reflect on their own Christian faith lived 'in the midst of Muslims.' Br. César Essayan and Br. Martin Kmetec presented the ABCs of Islam, explaining the origin of the religion, the sources which inspire it, and above all the figure of Mohammed, founder of Islam, as well as subsequent developments in history and in the world.

Dr. Semiha Topal from the University of Gediz and Sabri Demir, representative of the Mufti of Istanbul, spoke of the belief of Muslims, the challenges of contemporary society, and above of the Islamic presence in Istanbul and the relations with the other religions present in the territory. The friars met His Holiness Bartholomew I in a cordial atmosphere, where he spoke of his vision of ecumenism, sharing the desire to make, as soon as possible, together with Pope Francis, a visit to the Holy Land, in memory of the fiftieth meeting. They also visited the Basilica of Hagia Sophia, the Basilica said to be of the Cistern and the Blue Mosque, as well as hearing some witnessing of Christians who live their faith in the midst of Muslims. Mr. Alexandru Balaescu, anthropologist and vice-director of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Istanbul, treated the theme: Christians and Muslims: between past and present. This was followed by Mr. Rinaldo Marmara, historian and spokesman of the Turkish Bishops' Conference, who presented the history and current situation of Christianity in Turkey, a situation delicate but promising.

www.ofmconv.net

In memoriam: Br. Winfred, Wilhelmus Cornelis van den Berg

*February 16, 1930 +July 3, 2013

BREDA, Netherlands – As a young man he offered himself as a volunteer to rebuild Germany after the war, despite the clear refusal of his family in hostility to the context. At the age of nineteen he entered the Capuchin friary, taking the name 'Winfred,' wanting "not to be a hero, but to escape from the painful and inexplicable world to a more contemplative life." He was ordained priest at the age of 26 and for his first pastoral work he asked to return to Germany, to Hamburg, to be of service among the refugees of war coming from Poland, Hungary, and East Germany... those escaping from the 'Iron Curtain.' After two years he was recalled to the Province to meet the bishop Francesco Valdés Subercaseaux, who asked for two Capuchins to work in Chile, in one of the poorest places, San Juan de la Costa. Even though he had twenty-four hours to think he responded 'yes.' The spatial and cultural change was violent: from the great metropolis of Hamburg he arrived in an absolutely rural environment. Without road access, it was an isolation so great that he affirmed, "No one in Costa has ever seen a bicycle." The other barrier was that of language, in many moments the most difficult. The Capuchin began to form 'base communities,' long before Vatican II, this being the one way to start a coordination of people and from this was born the idea of using radio to help communication between them and the country. They had to have a voice, the 'Voice of Costa,' in order to be heard by authority in this state of misery. The radio began in 1966, integrated in the project of radio schools of Colombia, where Fr. Winfred traveled to learn the way of working and where he later realized the Escuta para Desarrollo Rural. From the beginning the programs were about nutritional self-sufficiency, as the greatest scourge was the lack of food. Another field was that of formal education with the Radio-School, using the pedagogical method of Paulo Freire. The missionary aspect was also looked after, covering all the needs of true pastoral work. Difficulties

increased with the military regime that sent some leaders of the radio and other collaborators to prison. In 1974, Br. Winfred Van den Berg took on the direction of the radio and of the parish in a more industrial, urban, and populated area and continued in this for twenty-five years. Br. Winfred was transformed into a defender of human rights and of the people. In 1978 the transmitters of the radio were burned intentionally and remained out of service for more than a year, but this, however, didn't stop him. In 1983, after thirty years of work, he had to give up a visit to his sick mother in the Netherlands, because voices were speaking of banning his return to Chile. A few months later, his house was attacked and remained under surveillance by the security forces. After an attack on the radio towers, he went to the Supreme Court to ask for protection. In 1988 a bomb was defused in the headquarters of the National Secretariat of the Youth. With the change and fall of the regime a national media campaign made repeated attacks on his person and his mission.

After forty years in Chile he decided that his mission was finished and that the Netherlands now had need of him. For months he prepared for his return, to come in 1999. There he dedicated himself to the immigrants and refugees and to initiatives for poor countries, maintaining also a continual contact with the mission in Chile with the creation of rural cooperatives, the construction of the bridge at Quilcahuín, and the protection of the native and indigenous territories and cultures, above all the Mapuchi. In 2009, on his 80th birthday, his family offered him a trip to Chile, where he received not only the gratitude of the people but also many tributes from authorities and institutions. His own city did the same, even making a documentary on the life and work of its son while he was still alive. His work continues as a sign of his memory living on in the many initiatives he inspired.

www.radiovozdelacosta.cl