

## PCO VIII is Coming

There are only a few weeks left until the celebration of the VIII Plenary Council of our Order, in which our efforts will be oriented towards reflecting, in the light of the Spirit, on the grace of working. The Conferences of the Order have appointed their delegates and these have already begun the work of a preliminary and common reflection that they will bring with them as their own proper contribution during the celebration of the PCO. In order to enrich the reflection even more, the General Council has asked the contribution of various speakers from different parts of the world, who, each with his or her own competence, will be able to illuminate further the perspectives on the theme of work.

Here following are the names of the speakers and the themes they will develop.

Prof. Mauro Magatti (Milan) – A sociologist and economist, Prot. Magatti studied Social Economics (DES) at Bocconi University in Milan, graduating in 1984, and then completed the PhD in Social Sciences in Canterbury (UK) in 1991. Since 1994 he has been in research at the faculty of political science at the Catholic University of Milan and an ordinary professor in general sociology since 2002. From 2006 to 2012

he was President of the faculty of sociology at the same University where he teaches the sociology of globalization and analysis of the institutions of contemporary capitalism. His talk will focus on the sociological aspects of work and their economic and cultural opportunities.

Mary Hess (USA) – will give a talk on work in relation to mass media; how the Capuchin friars can make use of it for announcing the Word of God and the impact that technology has on young people; how it influences their personal and virtual relationships; the consequences of social media in the daily life of young people.

Br. Giuseppe Buffon, OFM (Rome) – holds doctorates in church history from the Pontifical Gregorian University and in history from the École pratique des hautes études (Sorbonne) and is ordinary professor of modern and contemporary church history at the Pontifical Antonianum University. He is a member of the Technical Committee for the historical studies of the OFM, having already been on the Working Committee of the Department of Franciscan History and Editing Council of the Archivum Franciscanum Historicum. He will speak on his work in the Capuchin tradition.

Rev. Felice Accrocca (Latina) – is a

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priest of the diocese of Latina-Terracina-Sezze-Priverno, episcopal vicar for pastoral care and pastor in Latina. He is a scholar of medieval history and teaches in the faculty of history and cultural



Mauro Magatti



Giuseppe Buffon



Mary Hess



Felice Accrocca

goods of the Church in the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome as well as in the Theological Institute in Assisi. He is the author of numerous books and essays on Francis and Clare of Assisi and on medieval Franciscanism. His talk will focus on work in the primitive Franciscan fraternity as a fruit of evangelical inspiration.

Br. Luiz Carlos Susin, OFM Cap. (Brazil) - is a Capuchin friar and theologian, having graduated from PUC-RS in 1979 and from the UNIJUI in 1971. He completed the doctorate in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1983. Currently he is a professor at the PUC-RS and a researcher. He is also professor at the School of Franciscan Theology and Spirituality (Estef) in Porto Alegre, a member

of Sacred Scripture at the faculty of the Institute of Religious Sciences in Aveiro. He has dedicated his life to the promotion of meetings, conferences, and retreats of biblical formation on five continents. As a translator and interpreter he collaborates with many international organizations: the Capuchin Order, the International Theological Commission at the Vatican, the World Biblical Federation, the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, and also some NGOs. He will speak on biblical aspects of work and their vision and spirituality.

Br. Pio Murat, OFM Cap. - is a Capuchin friar. He will outline the previous PCOs, the Constitutions, and certain letters of the General Ministers on the theme of work.

that in the Order, the Church, and the world, under various titles, including the most disparate. Therefore, along with the speakers, many friars have been involved in order to share their experience of work. The methodology chosen, in this case, is that of witness, with the declared objective of offering to the delegates to the PCO concrete examples of work experienced as grace. In this framework, the following will participate in the PCO, offering their own proper witness: Bishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization; Br. Dominique Pacrot; Br. Benedict Ayodi; Br. Henryk Cisowski; Rev. Pedro Opeka; Br. Christophorus Geodereis; Br. Carmelo Saia.

A blog for the PCO has been



Luiz Carlos Susin



Fernando Ventura



Pio Murat

of the International Review of the Theological Committee for Concilium, and a member of the team for theological reflection of the Conference of Brazilian Religious. His talk with focus on the current and concrete context of work and the suggestions that the Magisterium of the Church offers to religious in order to move closer to the workers of our time.

Br. Fernando Ventura, OFM Cap. (Portugal) - is a Capuchin friar. He graduated from the Catholic University of Lisbon in theology. He then completed the licentiate in Biblical Sciences at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He has been director of the National Movement of Biblical Promotion, of a biblical review, and a teacher

The character that the General Minister with his Council wanted to impress on the celebration of the PCO is that of putting the delegates in a place of listening that is not configured exclusively as intellectual research in the various ways it can be seen in work; rather the characterization of this PCO will move along the involvement of a whole series of concrete figures

opened for the friars of the Order and will be updated daily on what happens during the working sessions. You can find the blog on the homepage of the site of the Order. ([www.ofmcap.org](http://www.ofmcap.org))

The conditions seem right for all to await a result that will come to us as a call, challenge, and blessing for our Order.



# Lebanon? refuge of exiles

Br. Abdallah Noufaily

The history of the 'Land of Cedars' as a country welcoming refugees goes back to the years of the First World War. Anyone who visits the cities on the periphery of Beirut meets the Armenians who came to Lebanon beginning in 1915. They formed the first wave of the refugees of modern times that have settled in the country.

Then, in the 40s and 50s, Palestinian refugees came to settle in various camps all over Lebanese territory. Later, with the wars in Iraq and then in Syria, the number of immigrants in Lebanon grew. As a consequence of these traumatizing events of war in nearby countries, the Lebanese live with a real fear: the 'guest' refugees constitute 50% of the population. It's a worrying and threatening fact! Furthermore, it is difficult to understand the political strategy of the Lebanese state regarding the situation. And the management of millions of refugees is further complicated by the fact that the politicians have not created camps for them that have the purpose of gathering them together. On the contrary, they have been scattered all over the territory of Lebanon.

To the crisis of lodging is added the crises of work, of security, and the humanitarian and health crisis. In other words, many of the exiles have no work, some rob in order to have money, others have difficulty in finding drinking water and the young people risk a serious loss of educational progress.

Faced with these difficulties, the Church in Lebanon has launched

an appeal for help and has criticized the silence and indifference of the politicians as well as helping the refugees in general and the Christians in particular, Christians that come from all the communities. Truly, these people who have been expelled are in misery and have a great need of help.

Along the same lines, the Lebanese Capuchins have taken the initiative in helping the Christian and non-Christian refugees from Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. They offer them food, clothing, etc. Faced with the cruelty of war and of exile, the friars reveal the merciful face of the Lord, welcoming Christian families in need into the friary of Notre-Dames des Anges in Badaro, Beirut. By doing this, the friars assure them food, lodging, and medical assistance. Clearly, all of this demands patience, oversight, and accompaniment. Therefore, a friar is in charge of visiting the families and accompanying them humanely and spiritually.

When they express themselves, the Christian refugees say that Lebanon is the last step before the West. Even though the 'Land of the Cedars' in the Middle East in considered Christian, they prefer to go elsewhere, because they are suffering degradation in their situation. They know that the resources of the Lebanese are limited and that Lebanon itself is in a difficult economic situation.

Hoping for better days, everyone prays that the peace may reign in the whole region of the Terra Sancta.

## The refugee Crisis and our Response as Capuchin Friars

Br. Benedict Ayodi

Recently on the news I was so moved to see German people cheering and welcoming refugees from Syria and other places in their town of Munich. The German citizens greeted the refugees with food and water, shelter and medical care, and a place to lay their heads. For me this was a true manifestation of the message of Jesus "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt. 25:35). While sharing with the Minister General, Br. Mauro, about the crisis, he was so touched, and thought we as Capuchin friars cannot sit back and watch silently as the refugees suffer; we must respond to the crisis the way Jesus and our founding father Francis would do. In this case, Br. Mauro wrote a letter to all the provincials of Europe and of Lebanon, Eritrea and Turkey calling them to an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis and how best we can help the refugees.

Indeed we know that the human dignity of each and every migrant or refugee is paramount. Religious, ethnic, social or cultural variables, citizenship or lack of it, do not change this fact that gives each individual an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity, in which every human life is and must be considered sacred. Following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who embraced lepers, the poor and the marginalized in his society, we should respond to this crisis with love and humility.

Quoting Pope Francis, Br. Mauro wrote "The exodus of peoples looks to our vocation as minors, to our charity, to our creative concreteness in its ability to make adequate responses" Pope Francis in the Angelus of this past September 6 said, "Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who flee death from war and hunger, and who have begun a journey moved by hope for survival, the Gospel calls us to be 'neighbours' of the smallest and the abandoned, and to give them concrete hope. It is not enough to say, 'Take heart. Be patient'.... Christian hope has a fighting spirit, with the tenacity of one who goes toward a sure goal" May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every shrine of Europe welcome one family, beginning with my Diocese of Rome. Br. Mauro was convinced that in many fraternities and in parishes entrusted to our friars there are already many initiatives in place that are responding to this invitation of the Pope. He therefore challenged friars to feel strongly called by this request and give an adequate and coordinated response. In this regard he asked the office of Justice, Peace, and the Care of Creation (JPIC) of the Order, to convoke a meeting at which he will be



present. The meeting will be held at Frascati and is planned for October 15 to 17th. We pray and hope that it will be a success and that practical plans to help respond to the refugee crisis will be made.

You are most welcome to the meeting.

#### JPIC course in Asia-Oceania

The ASIA-OCEANIA JPIC-PUA COURSE 2015 was an inter-Franciscan JPIC course designed to prepare Franciscan brothers and sisters working for the JPIC of their respective congregations to be JPIC animators. Over 70 brothers and sisters, both Franciscans and JPIC teams, took part in the course which took place in St. Francis Retreat Center, Manghaway, Talisay, Cebu, Philippines from July 26 to August 7, 2015. Participants gathered from several countries: Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Australia, Papua New Guinea and Philippines. Present were Br. Joe Rozanksy, OFM and Br. Benedict Ayodi OFM Cap., from their respective General Curias, as facilitators, as well as people from the private sector and Franciscans International.

Throughout the two week course, the participants underwent a gradual process of learning and conscientization. The activities and the sharing of the different JPIC Animators from the different countries likewise gave fresh insights and encouragement to the participants. The course afforded the participants a wider scope of networking and a closer collaboration among the participating countries, congregations and lay JPIC advocates.

THE CAPUCHIN ANIMATORS of the PACC JPIC: Eight Capuchins from the circumscriptions of the PACC attended the course, including friars from Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Korea and the Philippines. Br. Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap., Capuchin JPIC director, met the Capuchin friars two times (July 30, 2015 and August 3, 2015) during the course and together they formulated series of resolutions to submit to the Conference.

After the course in Cebu, Br. Benedict took time to visit several JPIC and social projects in the Philippines and Indonesia. In the Philippines, Br. Joel and Br. Eduardo have made preferential option for the poor their primary goal. They have built many shelters and schools for the victims of typhoon Haiyan. In Mandaluyong city, Br. Eduardo coordinates several social projects including a soup kitchen and a medical clinic for the poor. He also operates an urban farming initiative that uses free city spaces to grow organic crops for street families. Br. Joel, a medical doctor, coordinates the Capuchin medical missions



## ALAC meets to reflect on the theme of the PCO

**M**ONTERREY, Mexico – This past July ALAC (The Latin American Capuchin Assembly) met in Mexico. The meeting of Ministers and Delegates from the circumscriptions of the three Conferences of Latin America was celebrated in Monterrey, in the fraternity of St. Lawrence of Brindisi thanks to the very fine organization and hospitality on the part of the friars of the Custody of Northern Mexico.

The theme chosen for this Latin American meeting was that of PCO VIII, 'the grace of working.' Present at the meeting were Br. Mauro Jöhri, General Minister; Br. Sergio Dal Moro and Hugo Mejía, General Councilors; the Ministers and Custodes of the three Conferences; and the Delegates to the PCO.

Four topics were presented which raised up a great interest in the audience. Br. Guillermo Lancaster, OFM, presented a reflection on the vision of work in the life of Francis of Assisi. To speak on the vision of work in the history of the Capuchins was entrusted to Br. Pedro César Silveiro, OFM Cap. Among the offerings of the speakers, one that resonated very

much was from Br. Aldir Crocoli, OFM Cap., who spoke on the vision of work in our Constitutions.

The basic question was that of looking to find a most pertinent response to the question: What do the Latin American and Caribbean people want from the work of the Capuchins, today? Mr. Guillermo Vásquez, a layman who works with the Capuchins in Monterrey, presented a perspective on the work of the friars from the point of view of the laity. The General Minister made a presentation on Capuchin perspectives on work, inviting the participants to reflect on the main challenges in the Order.

At the conclusion of the meeting, ALAC sent a letter to all the friars of Latin America, sharing the conclusions and the challenges, as well as offering questions in light of the coming PCO. Beyond the abundant formation and the fruits of this meeting, it was also a good moment of fraternity, of discernment on the topic of work, and of the exchange of ideas that were useful and necessary for Latin America to prepare for PCO VIII.

in remote areas among the Mangyan people in Mindoro Island.

In Medan, the JPIC office is well established with three friars working full time. In recent times the friars have provided food and shelter to thousands of internally displaced persons fleeing volcanic eruptions on Mt. Sinabung. Br. Ivo, Br. Haron, and Br. Guido respond to the needs

of the marginalized in Medan by advocacy work, education, and charity to the poor. Br. Leo, a missionary from the Netherlands, has been working in Medan for many years and has done great missionary work including building many churches, schools and even mosques for Muslim worshippers.