

L-AHBAR

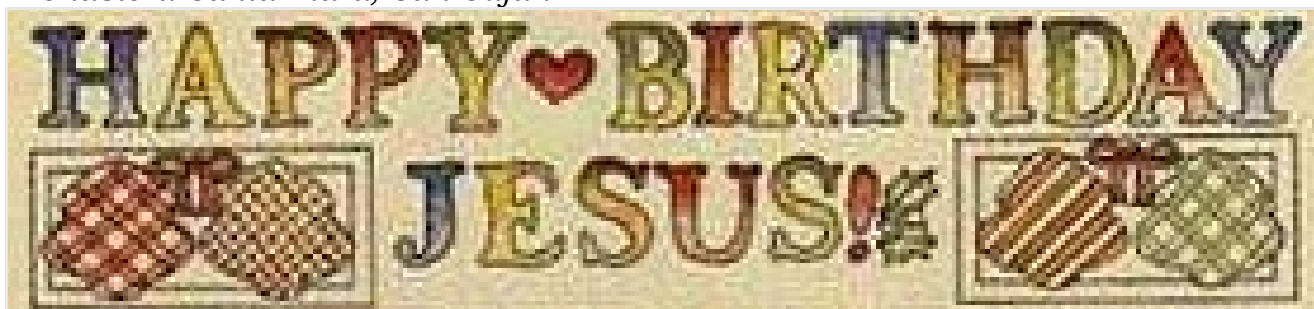


PROVINĊJA FRANGISKANA TA' SAN PAWL APPOSTLU, MALTA.

No. 119 1.12.2006



Monasteru Santa Klara, San Giljan



L-isbaħ xewqat ta' Milied hieni u qaddis, u s-sena 2007 tkun ta' paċi u gid!

- L-Editor

L-AĦBAR

JANNAR 2007



CONFERENCE OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

Living according to the Gospel

A letter of the Conference of the Franciscan Family in preparation of the 800th anniversary of the approval of the Rule



**125 Sena ta' devozzjoni
lejn il-Madonna
tas-Sacro Cuor**
Ġużep Vella, OFM



**Il-Fonti tal-Magħmudija –
l-guf tal-Knisja – sinjal li
jidher tal-guf ta' Marija**
Anton Farrugia, OFM



Patrijet Minuri (O.F.M.) 2007

**Il-lista alfabetika ta' l-Ahwa kollha tal-
Provinċja kif se nibdew is-sena 2007**



Cardinal Hummes OFM to Head Congregation for Clergy

Benedict XVI named Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, OFM, archbishop of Sao Paulo, 72, as prefect of the Congregation for Clergy replacing Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, 77, who presented his resignation to the Pope for reasons of age, but who will continue in his post as president of the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei.”

Claudio Hummes was born in Montenegro, in southern Brazil, to a family of German origin, in 1934. He was ordained a Franciscan priest in 1958.

He was named bishop in 1975, appointed archbishop of the Diocese of Fortaleza in 1996, then archbishop of Sao Paulo in 1998. He was created cardinal in 2001.

In 2002, Pope John Paul II invited him to preach spiritual exercises to the Roman Curia, meditating on how to be disciples of Christ. On reporting his appointment, Vatican Radio highlighted his commitment to ecumenical dialogue, promotion of the laity, the pastoral care of labor, and the formation of priests.

“He was one of the architects of the World Meeting of Families with John Paul II in Rio de Janeiro in 1997,” added Vatican Radio

"For you I am a Bishop but with you I am a Christian"

- Fr Paul Cremona, O.P.



Fr Paul Cremona, the 60-year old Valletta-born Dominican priest was on Saturday announced as the new bishop-elect of the Archdiocese of Malta, the 11th Maltese Archbishop. "Pope John Paul II was received [in Malta] with unforgettable enthusiasm as 'the second [Saint] Paul'. Today as per mandate of Pope Benedict XVI the diocese is being entrusted to another Paul," Apostolic Nuncio Felix del Blanco Priete announced to a crowd of journalists and the Presbyterian council meeting at the Curia in Floriana. Taking centre stage in a very humble way, confused and emotional, the new Archbishop invoked Bishop Saint Augustine: "For you I am a Bishop but with you I am a Christian."

Speaking to the press after his annunciation, the new Archbishop outlined his initial vision of the Church in Malta which he will be heading. "The Church needs to remain open, we are all sinners but we need to walk the path together. I want continuous dialogue, I want to be with each and every one of you, close to you" Fr Cremona said.

In his own words, his greatest value is that he can build the bridges. "We need to build the bridges that are needed to bring back the people who left the church." Commenting on the poor Sunday mass attendance, he said that this hurts, but at the same time we need to see what qualities the people are looking for in the church. "This is a personal experience for each and every person - we need the people to feel an intimate relationship with Christ."

THE LORD SPEAKS WITH US ON THE ROAD

Final Document of the Extraordinary General Chapter

La Verna-Assisi,
15th September to 1st October 2006

PRESENTATION

Dear Brothers,

May the Lord give you peace!

The Extraordinary General Chapter, which began in the Sanctuary of La Verna on the 15th September and continued at St. Mary of the Angels, was concluded on the 1st October 2006 in the Porziuncola. It was an important stage in the perspective of the celebration of the VIII Centenary of the approval by Innocent III of our *Rule and Life* and, therefore, of the foundation of our Order.

Moved by “divine inspiration”, we Friars Minor returned to Assisi to confront our origins and with the aim of responding to the question: “Lord, what do you want us to do as Friars Minor today?” Every Friar and every Entity can find the response in the Final Document, *The Lord Speaks with us on the Road*, which is “a reminder, an experience, a path, a sending forth, an ever open invitation” (n. 3) and a help, support and encouragement to put our charism into practice at the present moment, which the Lord, the Father of mercies, has given us to live.

The Document which I have the pleasure to present to each one of you today, following its approval by the General Definitory, is made up of two parts. In the first part, which we could call “inspirational”, it wishes to offer motives, support, light and guidance for the paths which the Lord invites us to travel with “clarity and audacity” at the present time. In the second part, the Document presents methodologies, suggestions and orientations so that the universal Fraternity and the local Fraternities, by following the same path though with different modalities and styles, may have the opportunity to incarnate into daily life all that frequenting the “altar of our memory and of our origins” (n. 7) allowed us to understand and intuit.

Dear Brothers, the Document *The Lord Speaks with us on the Road* calls for the Extraordinary General Chapter to be continued in each Friar and in each Entity. May the Lord and our father Francis support us on the way. May we travel this way according to the methodology of the biblical icon of the disciples of Emmaus, in order to discern how to improve our life and mission so that we may be “humble and simple signs of a star which still shines in the night of peoples, drawing us all towards the essentials of life” (n.9).

Rome, 1st November 2006
The Feast of All Saints

BR. JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CARBALLO, OFM
Minister General

Prot. 097353

Kopja shiha ta' dan id-dokument se jitqassam lil kull patri aktar 'l quddiem. Wiehed jista' jsibu wkoll fil-website ta' l-Ordni jew tal-Provincja.

“WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD!”

*(Congress of the Commissars of the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 19th November 2006)
Homily by Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, ofm
- Minister General
Joel 3, 1-5; Ps 103, 1ff;
Jn 20, 19-23*

Dear Brothers: May the Lord give you peace! “I rejoiced when I heard them say: Let us go to God’s house. And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem” (Ps 121 1-2). The joy a pilgrim of ancient Israel felt when he reached the holy city of Jerusalem for the first time is the same joy that we all feel each time we return to Jerusalem as it is like returning home, for what the Psalmist says can also be said of us: We were all born there.

This joy is even greater when we have the grace to celebrate the Eucharist here, on Mount Sion, in the Cenacle, the holy place among holy places. How could we fail to feel a deep joy when we are in the place where even today the words of Jesus during the Last Supper resound: “Take and eat, take and drink,



this is my body, this is my blood” (cf. Mt 26, 26-28), the words which instituted the Eucharist, of which we are ministers? How could we avoid trembling on hearing here, still today, the echo of those other words: “Do this in memory of me” (1Cor 11, 24-25),

through which the sacrament of Orders was instituted and which we, through pure grace, have received? How could we hide the joy we experience on hearing the words of the Lord: “For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven” (Jn 20,23), being

that we, as priests and through pure mercy, have received such power? How could we not feel comforted by the presence of the Holy Spirit, which descended on the Apostles at prayer here with Mary (cf. Acts 1, 14; 2, 1-4), and which is the soul of the mission of the Church (cf. AG 4), in which we directly collaborate? Yes, dear brothers, great is the joy and deep the emotion we feel as we walk in this holy place, a witness to the final moments of the earthly life of Jesus, a witness to the presence of the Risen One in the midst of His disciples, a witness to the eruption of the Holy Spirit into the Church, a witness to the first sending, to the first apostolic mission.

But for us Franciscans, this holy place, the Cenacle, has an even greater significance than for the other Christians, who come here from all over the world. Here, where the Church began, here, where the mission of the Church was born (cf. Jn 20, 20-21),

here also our mission in the Holy Land was born, the Custody of the Holy Land was born, and continues to be the “pearl” of the franciscan missions today. How can a sign of the providence of the Lord not be seen in this geographic coincidence! May the good Lord wish one day, not very distant, that this holy place would return to its legitimate owners: The Friars Minors, Custodians of the Holy Land in the name of the Catholic Church. May the Lord wish one day, not very distant, that the cloister of the old franciscan convent, still standing just a few metres from where we are gathered, be again the shelter of the sons of the Poverello, so that their presence in this holy place may be a continuation of that other presence which the Friars maintained in this place for centuries, until they were unjustly obliged to leave it.

But beyond these historical memories which this place evokes, beyond the emotions which this

place awakens in us all, we have to listen to the message which, after more than twenty centuries, still continues to be present in this place and to be very current for all of us who try to follow closely the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ and, in particular, for all of us who have professed the Gospel as our Rule and life (RB 1,1).

In order to perceive better and to accept this message more adequately, I think it is necessary to pay attention to some words of the texts to which we made reference previously.

“Take and eat, take and drink”, Jesus says to us. These words question us about the place the Eucharist occupies in our lives. The path we are called to travel in communion with our brothers, with the Church and hand in hand with the “minors of the earth”, who “have the power to guide us in our searches”, as the Final Document of the Extraordinary General Chapter reminds us (LSR 5), is a long one and, in many cases, full of difficulties. Like Elijah on the road to Horeb, we run the risk of being afraid or even of growing faint before such difficulties (cf. 1K 19, 3-5). If, on that occasion the Lord said to Elijah: “Get up and eat, or the journey will be too long for you” (1K 19,7), Jesus, today and always, says “take and eat, take and drink” to each one of



us. He is not only a travelling companion (cf. Lk 24, 13-36), He is also our food and viaticum (cf. Jn 6, 22ff). He not only satisfied the hunger of those who followed Him (Jn 6, 1ff), but today, like yesterday, He continues to satisfy the hungry (cf. Ps 104, 27-28). The Eucharist is strength to continue the journey, drink to satisfy the thirst which so often torments us, life in order to have life in abundance, which we ardently desire.

“As the Father sent me, I also send you”. And the Apostles set out. Closed gates opened wide and the proclamation of the Gospel arrived to all parts. And the Friars Minor, moved by divine inspiration (RB 12, 1), also set out, leaving their own homelands, families and cultures, and arrived in the east and the west, north and south, bringing to the four corners of the earth –as is indicated by the so-called “Cross of the Holy Land” or “Jerusalem Cross”, the symbol of the

Franciscans in this land-, the saving presence of the cross of Christ.

How can we, who are at the service of the “pearl” of the franciscan missions, carry out this mandate today? How can we, who have received the Spirit like the disciples, not set out to the ends of the earth? (cf. Jn 20, 22). How can we, on whom the Lord has poured out His Spirit, not be prophets through our life and word, and how can we not see a different future? (cf. Joel 3,1). We all, by our vocation, form part of a fraternity-in-mission, we are all missionaries, sent to give witness “in word and deed and to bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except Him” (LtOrd 9). We have all been sent to announce, as prophets, the Gospel and to be privileged instruments of reconciliation and pardon. How do we exercise this sacred ministry?

Many are be the difficulties, dear brothers, we will meet on the way.

But we are not alone. The Lord walks with us and makes Himself present in our midst in order to infuse peace into our dejected hearts, as in the case of His disciples (cf. Jn 20,21. 26), and to communicate to us His Spirit, which pushes us to the mission and gives us the courage, the parresia, to proclaim to all: “WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD!” (Jn 20,24).

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, on us and we will go out to the paths and squares to announce the Good News.

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, on us and our fear and cowardice will be conquered.

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and we will be new creatures.

Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord...

Ritratt: l-ewwel filliera, il-Kummissjarju ta' l-Art Imqaddsa Fra Twanny Chircop, OFM li qed jiehū sehem f'dan il-Kungress.



**Letter of the Minister General for the 550th
Anniversary of the death of St. John of Capestrano**

St. John of Capestrano

A man of great passions

Dear Brothers,
May the Lord give you peace!

A day of celebration was held in the Convent of St. Francis in Capestrano, in Abruzzo, on the 28th November 2006 to commemorate the 550th Anniversary of the death of St. John of Capestrano at Ilok on the 23rd October 1456. There was an Eucharistic celebration and two discourses on “John of Capestrano, a decisive man for a necessary reform” (Remo Guidi) and “John of Capestrano and the Popes of his time, based on documents preserved in the library of the convent of Capestrano” (Marco Bartoli). As announced in the Communication of the General Definitory of the 24th July 2006, the General Definitory, the Ministers Provincial of Italy and Friars from the Entities which had something to do with the activity of Capestrano, participated. An International Congress and a Symposium in honour of Capestrano was held earlier in Budapest, Hungary, on the 7th and 8th September 2006, and in Fraz, Austria, on the 20th October 2006.

The events of Budapest and Graz, the participation in honour of John of Capestrano in his native town, spurred me to write this letter to you, dear brothers, in order to invite you to celebrate enthusiastically this anniversary in the most suitable way, in the awareness that a deeper and more personal



knowledge of this illustrious son of St. Francis will lead to the discovery of his values, to appreciate his teachings and to “re-read” his testimony so as to draw from him support, motivation, light and strength to “favour the re-foundation of the

Order in view of a new beginning and of a new life”.

Is not the retelling of a great page of our history, written by the Lord through the life and activity of our Brother, perhaps, an opportunity to encourage us to write a new page of our his-

tory, written this time by us, moved by the same Spirit which called Francis and St. John of Capestrano, and which calls us today to place ourselves at the service of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and of our brothers?

Yes, that was the experience we lived in Assisi during the Extraordinary General Chapter in view of the celebration of the VIII Centenary of the foundation of our Order. It is from within this experience that I intend to pause to speak about John of Capestrano. I do not have the intention or the possibility to go into his very complex, problematical and, at the same time, fascinating personality. I do not propose to describe his breathtaking, intense and varied activity, because the literature for that end is abundant. I only wish to underline or recall *how* the man of Capestrano lived “the Rule and life” he had professed and *how*, being faithful to that proposal, he succeeded in influencing so profoundly, through his life and word, the most outstanding events of the history of the Church and of Europe at that time.

It is a question of commemorating St. John of Capestrano, not to stand spellbound before a family photo, but to identify, from his gospel-franciscan experience, some suggestions, indications and challenges in order to define evangelically our life and mission and to re-present afresh the fascinating face of Francis to the Church and world of today.

From “greater” to “minor”

John of Capestrano was an austere penitent, great reformer, sharp counsellor, wise legislator, fruitful writer, untiring preacher

of the Gospel, defender of the Apostolic See and Papacy, a man of prayer and action, apostle of Europe, convinced upholder of the rights of the weakest, formator of consciences and untiring apostle of peace. He was acclaimed as the “*stella Bohemorum*”, “*lux Germaniae*”, “*clara fax Hungariae*” and “*decus Polonorum*”.

But what is the key to reading his “success” or to interpret his biography, his language and his activity? An affirmed judge and much appreciated “political” man, John knew the harshness of prison, which was the cause of a deep religious crisis for him. Following a tenacious internal struggle and a stubborn resistance to the voice of St. Francis, who invited him to enter the Order, he decided to abandon the world and to follow the Lord alone, as he confided to a friend later. On the 4th October 1415 he began his novitiate at Monte Ripido, during which he proceeded in an impetuous manner along the way of *minority*, in accordance with the example of the Poverello of Assisi, the eloquent image of the *kenosis* of Christ (cf. *2Ltf* 4ff). And what happens – St. Francis wondered – to him who expropriates himself of everything in order “to offer himself naked to the embrace of the Crucified One”? Francis himself answered: “He will emerge an unchained lion, strong enough for anything, and the blessed sap which he tapped in the beginning will grow in him through constant progress. To him at last the true ministry of the word will be given safely, for he will pour out what bubbles up in his heart” (*2Cel* 194). The “unchained lion, strong enough for anything” immediately put his fer-

vour at the service of the Order and of the Church.

It is stimulating to think of the itinerary of conversion of John of Capestrano during the VIII Centenary of the encounter of Francis of Assisi with the Crucifix of San Damiano. That encounter initiated the still fascinating human and Christian adventure of the Poverello, articulated the reflections and activities of the Order in 2006, was an essential point of reference for the Extraordinary General Chapter, recently concluded, and for understanding what the Lord wants today of those who chose to follow the Gospel according to the project of life lived and proposed by St. Francis.

The Rule at the service of the Church

Barely ordained a priest, John of Capestrano assumed this task: “Even if I do not bear the ultimate responsibility, I gave decided to put all my strength into the defence of the flock of Christ until the last breath of my life”.

This passion for the “flock of Christ” led him to have an unlimited devotion to him who had the main responsibility for the flock, the Pope, to whose service he dedicated his whole life and energy, as can be seen from one of his letter-confessions to St. Bonaventure: “I am a weak, old, sickly man... I can do no more... But if the Pope were to request otherwise, I would not refuse, even if I had to drag myself half-dead, or I had to cross thorny hedges, fire and water”. This unconditional trust in the Petrine ministry has also to be lived by the Friar Minor. In the *Constitutionis Martiniana*, in fact, St. John of Capestrano recommended obedience to the Church to the Friars Mi-

nor, in accordance with the will of Francis in the Rule, as he was wont to remind a confrere contentiously: “It seems that you do not wish to have the Rule serve the Church, but the Church to serve the Rule. Our seraphic father St. Francis himself stated the opposite in his Rule. It is not the Church which is derived from our Rule, but the Rule from the Church”.

Returning to the “places” of our memory and of our origins to celebrate the Extraordinary General Chapter, we Friars Minor wished to renew our commitment to observing “the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ... firm in the Catholic faith... and always subject and submissive at the feet of holy mother Church” (*Rb* 12,3; cf. *Test* 34; *The Lord Speaks with us on the Road, LsR*, 8.14). If it is true, in fact, that “Francis is a key for understanding Peter and the Church”, as Benedict XVI said to the Bishop of Assisi, and to me in an audience granted to me on the 26th January 2006, it is also true that the gospel experience of Francis is understandable on the basis of the acceptance of his project of life on the part of the Church as a gift of the Spirit to the Church and for the Church.

Life at the service of the “flock of Christ”

“I sleep two hours or even one only, he was to say during a sermon in Vienna. I would rather sleep now than preach, but I do not belong to myself, but to you”. No longer belonging to himself, but to the “flock of Christ”, John turned all his fervour to the proclamation of the Gospel, not only in Italy, but also beyond the Alps, reaching Carinzia, Austria, Hungary,

Transylvania, Poland, Thurin-gen, Moravia and Bohemia. A fervour such as that of Capestrano was enthusiastically returned and the listeners to his preaching were so many as to force him to speak in the squares and in the fields. But not only that, the people wanted to see him, touch him, take pieces of his clothes and they turned to him asking to be healed, despite the fact that he brought them the relics of the newly canonised St. Bernardine!

In this way the itinerant preaching, which was so characteristic of the Franciscans of the XIII century and had fallen into a crisis at the beginning of the 14000, was taken up again by Bernardine of Siena and further extended by John of Capestrano, giving it a totally personal stamp. It was not only a time for the proclamation of the Gospel, but also for confessions, for the formation of consciences and for visits to the sick. It was, especially, an occasion for settling discord and re-establishing peace. The “tractare pacem”, “pacem reformare”, “bonam pacem conficere” constituted the heart of Capistrano’s preaching. In brief, we can see all that the Lord asked of His own on sending them to announce the Kingdom of God (cf. *Lk* 9,1ff; 10,1ff) being carried out in the apostolic activity of John of Capestrano.

It is a question of the same zeal for salvation as that of the Friars of the Poverello of Assisi, who “would not consider himself a friend of Christ unless he loved the souls which He loved” (*2Cel* 172) and of the same “style”. Having obtained the approval of the Pope, Francis, “going around the cities and villages, began to preach more widely” (*3Comp* 54). Such passion for the *salus animarum*

must abide in our hearts and our going out to people, since our reason for being in the Church and in the world is to live and proclaim the Good News to every human being, especially in the places of frontier, by giving preference to gospel itinerancy according to the sensitivity of Francis and the testimony of John of Capestrano. “You who are the ‘Friars of the people’ – John Paul II exhorted us in 1982 – should go out into the heart of the masses... Go out to meet the men and women of our times”.

The connection between our identity and our working, we are a Fraternity-in-mission, continually recalled by the recent documents of the Order, also requires that our zeal for the *salus animarum* be made practical in a franciscan way of living and announcing the Gospel, as is said in a summary way in the document of the Chapter: to be and to present ourselves as “lesser brothers to every man and woman in the same style as that of Francis when he sent his brothers throughout the world. ‘not to engage in arguments and disputes but [...] to be subject to every human creature for God’s sake’. This relationship in minority with all human creatures has implications for our mission: among the laity, in relationships with women, in our manner of living within the Church, in the necessity of inter-religious dialogue, in our relationship with creation and, in fact, in all our mission as minors among the lesser people of the earth” (*LsR* 30; cf. also 26-38.58).

Studies at the service of renewal

John of Capestrano also turned the fervour which burned inside him to the advantage of the Order, courageously and

tenaciously carrying out an influential activity of renewal, like Saints Bernardine of Siena, James of the Marches and Bl. Albert of Sarteano and Marco Fantuzzi of Bologna. The reform of the Order was carried out through the promotion of fidelity to the Rule of St. Francis, as the *Constitutiones Eugeniae*, written at La Verna in 1443, and his *Commentary on the Rule of St. Francis* show and also through the up-dating of the ideal of Francis in order to respond to the numerous and demanding challenges which ecclesiastical, political and social events continually presented.

A strong incentive, however, to his commitment to pushing the renewal of the Order forward was his conviction that studies, as “the search for wisdom”, were a formidable instrument of the Friar Minor, not only to give dignity and efficiency to the ministry, but also as a bridge for meeting the culture of the era. The conviction of Capestrano is explicitly manifested in his Letter to the Order, of the 4th February 1444, on the “need to promote studies among the Friars Minor”. In his impassioned plea in favour of studies, John of Capestrano, in his attempt to break down the resistance of the Friars to studies, used very strong expressions: “No one is a messenger of God if he does not announce the truth; and he cannot announce the truth if he does not know it;

and he cannot know it if he does not learn it”. The Friars, the Saint exhorts: “Must find the time to dedicate themselves to literature and the sciences... in order not to tempt God through vain presumption...”. He declared, without mincing his words: “O ignorance, stupid and blind mother of all errors...”. Distinguishing between “knowledge” and the “abuse of knowledge”, John of Capestrano affirmed that true knowledge leads to wisdom, “which comes from on high and is... the mother of every good and the teacher of every truth”.

In view of the “re-foundation” of our Order, the aim of our preparatory itinerary for the celebration of the *grace of our origins*, the expressions quoted from Capestrano are of a surprising actuality. Doesn't n. 12 of the document of the Extraordinary General Chapter say the same thing, though with different words? In our days also there is a need to recover the great philosophical, theological, mystical and artistic traditions of our franciscan patrimony “as a support for our mission of preaching the Gospel in word and deed in the midst of contemporary culture” (*LsR* 13; cf 12.56; *The flavour of the Word*, Rome 2005).

Conclusion

The Extraordinary General Chapter ended in Assisi on the 1st October 2006, but not in

the provincial and local fraternities or in the life of the individual Friars. It remains open, thanks to the Document *The Lord Speaks with us on the Road*, which continues to ask us: “Lord, what do You want us to do?” and offers us some motivations and indications for undertaking new paths and for remaining faithful to the *grace of our origins*.

However, there is no emptiness between us and our origins: there are names, faces, experiences and testimonies which transmit to us the fidelity to the tasks assumed on the day of their profession by very many of our Brothers and Sisters who preceded us.

Among these faces is John of Capestrano, who, on the 550th Anniversary of his death, offers us his sanctity, his fidelity to our origins and to his times, his love for studies, his commitment to peace and his itinerant preaching, as provocations to us who, today, with clarity and audacity, wish to serve the Gospel in accordance with the *forma vitae* of Francis of Assisi, so that it may still be, for us and for all, Gospel!

Rome, 8th November 2006
Memorial of Bl. John Duns Scotus

BR. JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CARBALLO, OFM
Minister General
Prot. 097384

Laqgħa mas-Seminaristi fil-kunvent tar-Rabat



Nhar it-Tlieta, 21 ta' Novembru, 10 seminaristi tat-tieni sena, żaru l-kunvent tar-Rabat, biex iqattgħu ftit ħin mal-formandi tagħna. Kienet inizjattiva sabiħa ħafna fejn kellhom iċ-ċans li jitolbu flimkien u jsiru nafu aħjar lil xulxin. Hemm il-ħsieb li laqgħat bħal dawn jissoktaw.

The two passions of Elizabeth of Hungary

(VIII Centenary of her birth)

17th November 2006

Br. José Rodríguez
Carballo, ofm
Minister General
Si, 26, 1-4. 13-21
Mt 25, 31-40

Dear Brothers: May the Lord give you peace! Coinciding with the closure of our meeting, the VIII Centenary of the birth of St. Elizabeth, princess of Hungary, grand Countess of Thuringen and franciscan penitent has officially begun. This Jubilee, which very closely touches the Brothers and Sisters of the TOR and SFO, who are honoured to have her as their Patroness, has also to be celebrated in a proper way by all of us who form part of the great Franciscan Family, because she is, in all justice, one of its glories.

Faced by this jubilee celebration, in profound communion with the entire Franciscan Family, especially with the brothers and sisters of the TOR and SFO, it is logical that we ask ourselves: What message does the figure of St. Elizabeth address to us Friars Minor? What can she, a woman wrapped in the obscurity of the distant past and in a world of legends, say to the Franciscans today? What can

this woman, separated from us by so many years and so many other things say to us?

Her message, which turns her into a really current figure, takes its power from her two great passions: her passion for Christ and her passion for the poor. A dual passion which puts her into perfect spiritual and charismatic harmony with Francis, by whom she was undoubtedly inspired, and with Clare, both hearts conquered by Christ and by the poor, in whom they discovered Christ. Her whole life, including her life of extreme penance, can only be understood in the light of these two passions.

In Elizabeth's case, her passion for Christ led her to assume the Gospel as her form of life and to live it in the most genuine style of Francis: simply, without *glossa*, in all its spiritual and material aspects. This was a proposal which was manifested in her deepest existential attitudes, such as: the recognition of the absolute lordship of God; the need to free herself from everything and to become small like a child in order to enter the Kingdom of the Fa-

ther; the fulfilment, up to the ultimate consequences, of the new commandment of love.

She left nothing in writing, but numerous passages of her life can only be understood from a literal understanding of the Gospel. She made the programme of life proposed by Jesus in the Gospel a reality:

– Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it (Lk 17, 33; Mk 8, 35).

– if anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me (Mk 8, 34-35).

– If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you own and give the money to the poor, then come follow me (Mt 19,21).

– Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me (Mt 10,37).

Her passion for Christ was manifested and nourished thanks to a profound communion with Him through a life of intense, continuous prayer, even ecstasy at times. Her constant awareness of the presence of the Lord was

the source of her strength and joy, and of her commitment to the poor. The meeting with Christ in the poor also stimulated her faith and her prayer, for her encounter with them led her to “identify herself” with them. It is not strange, then, that her pilgrimage towards God was marked out by determined stages of detachment until she arrived at a total stripping, like Christ on the cross. In the end he was left nothing more than the grey and poor tunic of penance which she wished to keep as a symbol and a shroud.

Her passion for Christ, who *being rich made Himself poor*, led her to follow Him radically and to discover and serve Him in His “representatives, the poor and crucified of the earth”, as the Final Document of our Extraordinary Chapter says (*LSR* 9). Elizabeth personally served the downcast, the poor and sick. She took care of lepers, the dregs of society, like Francis. Day by day, hour by hour, poor man by poor man, she lived and used the mercy of God in the river of pain and misery which surrounded her. Elizabeth saw the person of Christ in the misfortunate (*Mt.* 25,40). This gave her strength to overcome her natural repugnance, so much so that she could kiss the purulent sores of the lepers.

Forged in the gospel forge of Francis of Assisi, she, like the Poverello and

Clare, his “little plant”, Elizabeth abandoned the lies and ambitions of the world, the pomp of her court, the comforts, wealth and luxurious attire... She went down from



her castle and pitched her tent among the despised and wounded in order to serve them.

Sanctity consists of loving as Jesus loved. To love God and to love one’s neighbour are two commands which cannot be separated. Passion for Christ, passion for the poor, are two passions which necessarily go together always. But is all this not a madness? Yes, it is the madness of love which knows no limits, it is the madness of sanctity. And Elizabeth is an authentic mad-woman. In her life there shone, with singular splendour, the supremacy of charity. Her person was a song to love, shaped in service and ab-

negation, emptied out in order to sow good, like the love of every “good woman” of whom the first reading speaks to us (cf. *Si.* 26, 1-3). This love which caused an upsurge in her of interior burning strength proper to a “perfect wife” (cf. *Si* 26, 2), as Elizabeth was, led her to radiate joy and serenity, even in tribulation, loneliness and pain. Faithful to her motto, “we have to make men happy”, as she used to say to her servants-sisters, Elizabeth gladdened the heart of whoever came close to her (cf. *Si* 26, 13). The depths of her soul were inhabited by the kingdom of peace.

Elizabeth passed through this life like a luminous and hope-giving meteor. She enkindled lights in the darkness of many souls. She brought joy to afflicted hearts. No one could count the number of tears she wiped away, the wounded she healed, the love she awakened.

At this time in which our Order is engaged in a profound renewal which should lead us to follow Christ “more closely” and “more radically” and when the Extraordinary General Chapter has asked us repeatedly to “be minors with the minors of the earth”, Elizabeth is presented to us not only as a deeply gospel woman, but as a model to follow in her passion for Christ and for the poor.

Let us who follow
ikompli fpaġna 28

Communication of the General Definitory - November 2006

The General Definitory celebrated its “tempo forte” from the 6th to the 11th of November 2006. It dealt with the following topics, among others:

1. Communication. As is customary during the “tempo forte”, the time necessary was spent on an exchange of impressions about the activities of each member of the Definitory carried out since the last “tempo forte”: visit to the Province of Michoacán, in México (Minister, Br. Luis and Br. Ignacio); Visit to the Province of Thaiwan, to the Foundation of Hong Kong and to China (Minister and Br. Van Si); Visit to the Friars of Cuba (Minister and Br. Luis); Visit to the Province of India (Minister and Br. Van Si); Meeting of the Franciscan Family (Minister); Visit to the Province of Mostar (Br. Sime); Visit to the Custody of the Holy Family USA (Br. Finian); Visit to the Friars of Turkey (Vicar General and Br. Vincenzo); Visit to the friars of Russia (Vicar and Br. Mario); COMPI meeting (Br. Mario); COTAF meeting (Br. Jacab); meeting of the Council of the Federation of Morocco (Br. Miguel and Br. Amaral); Visit to

Sudan (Br. Amaral and Br. Vincenzo); participation in the “seminar” about dialogue (Br. Finian, Br. Miguel, Br. Amaral and Br. Ignacio); encounter with the preparatory commission for the meeting between the Franciscans living among Moslems (Br. Miguel); Meeting with the preparatory commission for the Chapter of the young “under ten” friars (Br. Ignacio).

2. Canonical visitations. The Definitory examined and approved the Reports of the Canonical visitations carried out in the Provinces of Albania and Bologna.

3. Visitators General. The Definitory appointed Br. Luis Pérez, from the Province of St. Gregory in Spain as Visitator for the Province of Portugal.

4. Missionary projects and other Franciscan presence. The Definitory, together with the Moderator of the Missions evaluated the Missionary Projects of the Order in Thailand, Russia/ Kazakhstan, Myanmar and China and spoke

about our presence in Turkey. It was a positive Evaluation even if there is the need to keep accompanying them closely.

5. Sudan Project. As regards the Sudan Project the Definitory decided that the first Franciscan presence in Sudan will start during next July with four friars (a Filipino, a Croat and two Sudanese) who are presently preparing themselves in Rome and Egypt. The Friars will live in the outskirts of Khartoum and will offer a service of spiritual accompaniment to catechists, priests and other religious while working, at the same time, among the refugees of the desert and in other “pastoral units” that will be entrusted to them by the archdiocese of Khartoum

6. Personnel. The Definitory made the following appointments: Br. Seán Collins, from the Irish Province, General Secretary of the Order; Br. Macedonio Arellano, from the Province of Michoacán (Mexico), Vice Postulator general; Br. Fernando

Campagna, from the Province of Salerno (Italy), guardian of the fraternity of St. Anthony (Rome); Br. Antonio Baù, from the Province of Venice (Italy), Rector of the Basilica of St. Anthony (Rome); Br. Nguyen Gia Thinh Jean François, from the Province of Vietnam, guardian of the Fraternity “Notre Dame des Nations”, in Brussels; Br. Damien Isabell, from the Province de Congo, Coordinator of the formation missionary programme in Brussels.

7. Fundraising Project.

The Definitory approved the new Fundraising project for the next three years presented by the new director of the “Fundraising office”, Br. Moisés Gutiérrez, from the Sacred Heart Province (USA).

8. Meeting with the OFM Bishops.

The general Definitory decided to hold a Meeting with the OFM Bishops from the 18th to the 22nd of June 2007, to be held in Assisi and Rome, and approved the agenda for the said encounter.

9. Chapter of Mats for the Houses depending on the Minister general.

The Definitory approved the final agenda for the said chapter which will be held in Rome between the 16th and the 18th of March 2007.

10. Requests for financial help.

The

Definitory approved some of the requests for economic aid that have arrived lately at the General Curia from needy Entities.

11. VIII Centenary of the Foundation of the Order.

On the 23rd of January 2007, coinciding with the Meeting in Rome of the newly elected Ministers Provincial, the Definitory will commence the second phase of “The Grace of the Origins” project. The Definitory appointed also a commission to prepare an Exhibition with documents related to the history of our Order. This exhibition will be held in Rome towards the end of 2008 or the beginning of 2009. The Definitory decided, also, that the Order will sponsor, together with the Franciscan Family, an International Congress on the Franciscan Rule that the International Society of Franciscan Studies will organize in 2009.

12. Statutes for Canonical Visitation and the Presiding of Provincial Chapters

(=SCV). The Definitory approved the revision of the SCV which will come into effect in September 2007

13. “Folders”. The Definitory dealt with about 60 matters of its competence which came from the different Entities of the Order and needed a decision on the part of the

Definitory.

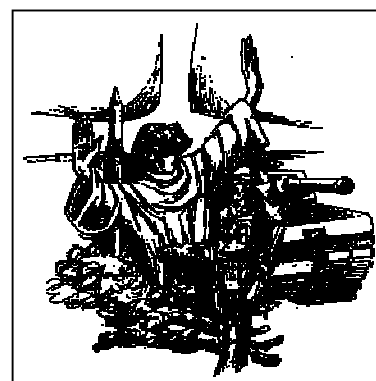
14. European Itinerary Fraternity. The Definitory decided to request to the Province of Rome the house of Palestrina so as to locate there the European Itinerary Fraternity which is expected can begin its work at beginning of 2007.

15. Meeting with the Visitors. The Meeting with the Visitors general for 2007 will be held at the General Curia from the 13th to the 17th of November.

16. Other Meetings.

During this “Tempo Forte” the Definitory participated in the academic Act that was celebrated at the Pontifical Antonianum University in honour of the Blessed Duns John Scotus on November 8th. Also during this time the Commission for the Entities and the Commission for the Chapter of the young “under ten” friars met at the General Curia.

Br. Sandro Overend
Rigillo, ofm
General Secretary



Kapitlu tal-Ħsajjar

Porziuncola Retreat House, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq

Programm

7 - 9 ta' Jannar
2007



Programm:

9.00 am: Tifhir ta' Sbiħ il-Jum

9.30 am - 10 30 am: Relazzjoni
minn Fra Giacomo Bini OFM

10.30 am: Kjarifikazzjoni

10.45 am: - 11.15 am: Coffee
Break

11.15 a.m. - 12.15 pm: Work-
shops

12.30 pm: Ikel

3.30 pm: Kafe'

4.00 pm - 5.15 pm: Għasar u
Assemblea Plenarja

5.45 pm - 7.00 pm: Servizz
Penitenzjali/Lectio Divina

7.00 pm: Cena

***Niltaqghu għall-Ewkaristija,
il-Ħadd, 7 ta' Jannar 2006
għand hutna l-Klarissi
fis-6.00 pm.***

L-esperjenza tal-Kapitlu Generali Straordinarju



1) L-ewwel haġa mportanti li niftakru hi li dan ma kienx Kapitlu Elettiv, iżda Kapitlu Spiritwali, Kapitlu ta' tiġdid fis-sejha franġiskana. Bhala hsibijiet fundamentali kellu l-istess relazzjoni tal-Ministru Ġeneral li kienet stampata f'dokument "Bis-sinċerita' kollha u b'rieda soda".

Fil-bidu tad-Dokument il-Ġeneral jistqarr li l-Ordni ghaddej minn kriżi. U din hija xi haġa naturali wara tmien mitt sena. Iżda jkompli jgħid li l-kriżi ghandha tkun mument ta' grazzja. Mument ta' grazzja għax thegġigna biex nidhlu dahla fina nfuṣna. Mument ta' grazzja għax tfakkarna fir-responsabilita' tagħna lkoll lejn is-sejha franġiskana. Il-kriżi hija frott kemm taż-żmien kif ukoll ta' kull wiehed minna.

2) Minn din l-istqarrija, jiena nhoss li l-Ministru Ġeneral sejjah dan il-Kapitlu Generali Straordinarju, biex

iwassal messaġġ reali tas-sitwazzjoni preżenti ta' l-Ordni u fl-istess hin messaġġ positiv biex l-Ordni ma jaqax vittma tal-kriżi preżenti. Il-hsieb tiegħu jidher ċar, li mis-sitwazzjoni ta' kriżi, l-Ordni jhoss il-htieġa li jiggedded biex bil-kuraġġ kollu ihares lejn futur sabih.

3) B'kollox konna madwar 180 ruh. Il-ġranet kienu impenjattivi hafna. Nibdew fis-seba' ta' filgħodu sas-seba' ta' filgħaxija, b'waqfa ta' saġhtejn wara nofs-in-nhar. Haġa pożittiva kienet li kellna hafna hin għal diskusjonijiet fi gruppi wara kull talk. Fl-ewwel ġimgha konna mqasmin fi gruppi skond il-lingwa u t-tieni ġimgha skond il-konferenzi. Bhala lingwa Ingliza konna l-akbar grupp għax barra l-membri tal-Konferenza Ingliza, ingħaqdu magħna ż-żewġ Konferenzi ta' l-Asja u dik ta' l-Afrika. Din hi xi haġa nteressanti meta tiltaq-gha ma' ahwa li ġejjin minn

ambjenti u esperjenzi totalment differenti minn xulxin. Kellna mumenti ta' talb qawwija meta żorna is-santwarji franġiskani La Verna, San Damiano, Greccio, Fonte Colombo, Il-Bażilka ta' San Franġisk, u l-Porziuncola. L-aktar mument qawwi ta' talb kien f'Fonte Colombo, fejn spiċċajna billi l-Ministru Ġeneral tana kopja ta' Regula miktuba bl-idejn minn sorijiet, biex tinzamm f'kull Provincja, b'tifkira tat-tmien ċentinarju. Bhala attivitajiet kulturali kellna kunċert fil-Porziuncola mill-Kor tal-Kappella Sistina u anke mima bil-kant u żfin mill-GIFRA tal-Parroċċa tal-Porziuncola.

Il-Kapitlu gie fit-tmiem tiegħu, il-Hadd l-1 ta' Ottubru bl-ahhar laqgħa fis-sala Kapitulari u b'konċelebrazzjoni fil-Porziuncola. Jiena inhoss, li fid-diskors finali, il-Ministru Ġeneral tagħna sintesi tal-hidma kollha tal-Kapitlu. Huwa beda billi qal li l-Kapitlu jehtieġ li jitkompla b'mod prattiku f'kull entita' ta' l-Ordni. Hawnhekk huwa tefa' r-responsabilita' fuqna l-Provincja biex kull wiehed minna jagħmel dak kollu li jista' biex iwettaq l-ispirtu tal-Kapitlu fil-Provincja partikulari f'dawn is-snin sas-sena 2009. Huwa hegġigna biex l-esperjenza li ghixna matul il-Kapitlu, ma' nhalluhiex tispicċa fix-xejn, imma ghandna tkun ta' ispirazzjoni u kuraġġ quddiem ir-realta' tal-kriżi fi hdan l-Ordni. Huwa bena id-diskors tiegħu fuq dawn il-punti.

Il-Forma tal-Hajja Franġiskana

Mill-istess esperjenza ta' Frangisku, il-hajja frangiskana ghandha lil Kristu bhala centru ta' kollox mibnija fuq il-Vangelu u l-hajja fraterna. Biex jghix din is-sejha, il-frangiskan ta' kuljum irid igedded fih il-grazzja tas-sejha. Hemm bzonn li ma nitbghedu qatt minn din ir-realta' tal-grazzja tal-Vokazzjoni. Bhala bnedmin dghajfa facli naslu nibnu hajjittna fuq il-kapacitajiet personali taghna u ninsew il-grazzja tas-sejha.

Bhala ghajnuna Prattika l-Ministru jissuggerixxi li ta' kuljum b' mod personali ingeddu l-forma tal-Professjoni Solenni. Hemm bzonn li ta' kuljum mit-tajjeb ngħaddu għal l-ahjar. Biex nghixu verament il-prezenza ta' Kristu, jehtieg li ta' kuljum niggeddu fir-rabta taghna lejn Alla u lejn hutna. Bhala mudell ahna għandna lil Frangisku li bena ir-relazzjoni tieghu ma' Kristu permezz tal-Vangelu u l-hajja fraterna.

Il-bzonn tal-konverzjoni

Matul il-jiem tal-Kapitlu instghemet sew l-ghajta għall-konverzjoni, il-htiega li nirritornaw lejn il-Vangelu biex nirritornaw lejn Kristu, il-htiega li nagħtu l-hajja mill-gdid il-hajja fraterna skond il-hsibijiet originali ta' Frangisku. Qed tinhass il-htiega li ntejbu l-komunikazzjonijiet ta' bejnietna, li nkunu aktar miftuha għal xulxin, li nwaqqghu il-hitan ta' bejnietna u kull preġudizju lejn xulxin, li nikkumbattu kull sens ta' provinjalizmu u kull sens ta' separazzjoni. Hemm bzonn li nkunu miftuha għad-dinja kollha. Il-Kapitlu sejhilna b' mod urgenti, biex ma naqghux vittmi tal-križi u tal-biża', biex ma ningħalqux fina n fusna, u biex ma nipprezentawx lilna n fusna f' hajja komda u zgura tal-kunventi taghna. Hemm bzonn li ninqalghu mill-għerūq biex ninzerghu mill-gdid. Hemm bzonn li nhossuna li ahna

itineranti. Il-Kapitlu fakkarna biex ma nintrabtux iżzejjed ma' xi hidma partikulari jew ma l-efficjenza personali.

Bhala ghajnuna Prattika il-Ministru jitlob lill-entitajiet kollha biex ifasslu programm ta' formazzjoni permanenti li jkun jinkludi l-aspetti kollha tal-hajja frangiskana, jigifieri dwar il-grazzja tas-sejha, dwar il-hajja fraterna u dwar il-hajja ta' evangelizzazzjoni.

Il-hajja fraterna

Il-hajja fraterna kienet tema l-aktar importanti matul il-Kapitlu kollu. L-istess Ministru fid-diskors finali tieghu tkellem fit-tul dwar diversi aspetti tal-Hajja Fraterna. Diversi drabi matul il-Kapitlu inhass l-ispirtu u l-bzonn biex inkomplu dejjem nikbru bhala Fraternita' u biex inwiegħbu kontinwament għas-sejha frangiskana bhala ahwa. Kif il-hajja u l-missjoni ta' Missierna Frangisku inbniet fuq l-esperjenza ta' hajja ta' ahwa, hekk ukoll il-hajja taghna bhala segwači ta' Frangisku, għandna tibqa' tkun mibnija fuq il-hajja tal-Fraternita'. Ma nistghux nitkellmu mill-hajja Frangiskana mingħajr il-hajja Fraterna. Ma nistghux nitkellmu minn hidma frangiskana jekk mhux fl-ambjent ta' hajja fraterna.

Il-Ministru jistqarr li l-mixxa tal-hajja fraterna tiddependi hafna mill-mixxa tal-Fidi kemm ta' kull individwu kif ukoll tal-Fraternita'. Diversi drabi tkellimna minn križi ta' Fidi kemm fl-aspett personali kif ukoll bhala Ordni. Għalhekk jekk irridu verament nissahhu dejjem aktar fil-hajja ta' bejnietna bhala ahwa, hemm bzonn li nibzghu għad-Don tal-Fidi, hemm bzonn li nissahhu kontinwament fil-Fidi. Bhala ghajnuna Prattika, il-Ministru jitlob li fil-programmi ta' hajja fil-fraternitajiet għandu jkun hemm kull ghajnuna

u kull spazju għat-talb kemm personali kif ukoll komunitarju u biex jinholqu mumentu fejn il-fraternita' tkun tista taqsam l-esperjenzi tal-Fidi. Hawnhekk il-Ministru Ġeneral jitlob lill-Provinċjali, Gwardjani u Formaturo biex jagħtu l-attenzjoni kollha dwar il-hajja tat-talb fost dawk responsabbli minnhom.

Aspett iehor dwar il-Hajja Fraterna li tkellem fuq il-Ġeneral, huwa li ahna fraternita' wahda magħmulha minn ahwa lajci u sacerdoti bl-istess drittijiet u obligazzjonijiet, fuq l-eżempju ta' l-ewwel fraternita' ta' Frangisku u l-ewwel segwači. Kif tafu diversi drabi l-Ordni għamel it-talba lis-Santa Sede biex l-Ordni jigi rikonoxxjuti bhala Mixed Institute. Minn naha taghna, biex bil-mod tinbidel il-mentalita' klerikali, qabel xejn kemm jista jkun, għandu jkun hemm programm ta' formazzjoni inizjali komuni kemm għal lajci kif ukoll għal dawk li jkomplu għas-sacerdozju. Haġa oħra hi li bil-mod il-mod isir tibdil fil-hidma pastorali li sa issa kienet dejjem ibbazata fuq hidma semplicement klerikali. Hemm bzonn ta' pastorali fejn jistghu jagħtu is-sehem tagħhom ukoll l-ahwa lajci.

Il-Ministru rrefera wkoll għal fatt li mill-esperjenza tal-Kapitlu nindunaw kemm ahna fraternita' internazzjonali u nterkulturali. Din hija xi haġa prezzjuza li rridu nibzghu għaliha għax tagħmel minna sinjal għad-dinja tallum li tant hi maqsuma. Hemm bzonn li insahhu dejjem fina l-kuncett li ahna ngħamlu parti minn fraternita' universali. Nikkumbattu dak kollu li jwassalna biex ningħalqu fina n fusna, kemm bhala individwi kif ukoll bhala provinċja. Biex inqawwu fina dan is-sens internazzjonali, il-Ġeneral iheggeg biex jitwaqfu djar ta' studji u formazzjoni

bejn Provinċji differenti. Ihegġeġ ukoll għal-laqgħat ta' formazzjoni permanenti fuq skala nternazzjonali għal gwardjani u formaturi. Jitkellem ukoll mill-importanza ta' laqgħat internazzjonali għall-ahwa żgħar u mit-tagħlim tal-lingwi.

Punt iehor li tkellem fuqu il-Ġeneral hu li bhala ahwa frangiskani għandna nkunu kumplimentari għal xulxin bejn il-fergħat kollha fi hdan l-Ordni Frangiskan. Hija xewqa tal-Ministri Ġenerali kollha, li kemm jista jkun iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tat-tmien ċentinarju tar-regula Frangiskana jsiru f'sens ta' kollaborazzjoni bejn il-fergħat kollha. Anzi dan għandu jkun mument ta' grazzja biex nahdmu dejjem aktar flimkien.

Jehtieg li ahna nkunu fraternita' ta' djalogu u ta' missjoni. Ahna neżistu bhala ahwa tal-poplu. Kif għamlu ta' qabilna tul tmien mitt sena, ahna wkoll jehtieg li nohorgu biex niltaqgħu ma' kulhadd u nirbhu dak kollu li jista' johloq kull sens ta' divizjoni. Għalhekk hija haga necessarja formazzjoni intellettuali soda li thejjina sew għad-djalogu mad-dinja tallum.

Fraternita' fi proċess

Sewwa ngħidu li l-hajja ta' fraternita' hija grazzja, iżda hi ukoll responsabilita' iebes. F'din id-dinja l-ideal ta' fraternita' perfetta ma jeżistix, jeżisti proċess għall-fraternita' perfetta. Mis-sejha tagħna, ahna bennejja tal-hajja fraterna. Bhala għajnuna Prattika, il-Ministru Ġeneral jitlob attenzjoni partikulari lejn il-Kapitlu lokali u kull forma oħra ta' laqgħat. F'dan il-kuntest, il-Ministru tkellem dwar is-suggeriment mid-Definitorju Ġenerali li f'kull Provinċja jiġi organizzat il-Kapitlu tal-Hsajjar bhala kontinwazzjoni tal-Kapitlu Ġenerali Straordinarju. Dawn għandhom ikunu kollha strumenti ta' għajnuna biex tissahhah dejjem iżjed il-komunikazzjoni ta' bejnietna u tal-fraternita'. Rigward il-Hajja fraterna, il-Ministru jispiċċa billi jistqarr li biex nikbru fil-hajja fraterna hija ndispendabli il-formazzjoni umana li twassalna ngħixu il-hbieberija, is-sincerita', il-fiducja, id-djalogu u anke il-ferh u ċ-ċajt tal-hajja.

Qabel l-ahhar appelli, il-Ministru għadda biex jappella lill-Provinċji kollha, li bhala

sinjal ta' rieda tajba għal dawn iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tat-tmien ċentinarju mill-bidu ta' l-Ordni, huwa juri il-bżonn ta' aktar personel u ta' aktar għajnuna finanzjarja biex jissahhu l-proġetti missjunarji u ċ-ċentri ta' l-istudji ta' l-Ordni. Bhala sinjal ta' solidarjeta' lejn l-Ordni kull Provinċja toffri wiehed mill-ahwa għad-disposizzjoni tal-Ministru Ġeneral, li jkun irid jagħti servizz fil-missjonijiet, ċentri ta' studji u fraternitajiet li jiddependu direttament mit-tmexxija ta' l-Ordni. Wara li irringrazzja lil kulhadd għall-appoġġ u kuragg li dejjem sab, għadda għal sensiela ta' appelli lill-Provinċjali u lill-Kustodji.

- Morru u invitaw lill-ahwa għajjena biex jergħu iqumu u jkomplu l-mixja, filwaqt li turuhom il-htieġa kemm għandhom jgħinu lilhom infushom.
- Morru u habbru l-ahbar it-Tajba ta' l-Ghid lill-ahwa ta' qalbhom maqsuma biex id-dmugh tal-hajja ma jfixkilhomx li jaraw is-sabih ta' Kristu Rebbieh.
- Morru u habbru il-Vangelu kollu hniena lil



- ahwa midinba. Morru u habbru l-Vangelu tal-fedelta' lejn Alla lill-ahwa li qed jaqtghu qalbhom li jkomplu jghixu is-sejha. Ghinuhom jerggħu iwiegħbu għas-sejha bħal meta kienu għadhom żgħar.
- Morru u habbru l-Vangelu tal-hajja fraterna lill-fraternitajiet mifruda. Uruhom is-sabih ta' meta l-ahwa jghixu flimkien magħqudin.
- Morru u habbru l-Vangelu radikali ta' Kristu lill-ahwa żgħar u l-Vangelu ta' l-ghotja dejjiema lill-ahwa anzjani.
- Morru għand l-Ahwa li jghixu is-sejha tagħhom bl-akbar fedelta', uruhom kemm ihobbhom Alla u hegħgħom biex jibqgħu fidili lejn is-sejha.
- Morru għand l-Ahwa li tiltaqgħu magħhom u għidulhom li huma mberkin minn Alla u li quddiem Alla xejn mhu impossibbli.
- Morru u għamlu minn hajjitkom l-Ahbar it-Tajba ta' Kristu. Morru għand l-Ahwa kollha u wasslulhom l-isbah tisljiet tal-Ministru u tad-Definitorju Ġenerali
- Morru, il-Mulej dejjem magħkom u jwegħdtkom il-frott għall-hidma tagħkom. Il-Kapitlu ġie fit-tmiem, iżda fl-istess hin se jkompli permezz tal-hidma tagħkom fost l-Ahwa kollha. Kunu kreattivi u l-Mulej jghinkom u jagħtikom kull għajnuna biex twasslu din l-esperjenza ta' grazzja li għixna flimkien matul il-jiem tal-Kapitlu. Kif għadkom kemm smajtu, għalkemm il-Kapitlu ġie fit-tmiem, iżda l-hidma trid tkompli fil-Provincja. Kif smajtu, il-Ministru Ġeneral

halla fir-responsabilita' tal-Ministri Provincjali li l-ispirtu u l-ġid tal-Kapitlu jitwassal lill-ahwa kollha mxerdin mad-dinja kollha. Kif stajtu tinnutaw mill-istess diskors tal-Ministru Ġeneral, l-aktar tema importanti u diskussa kienet il-hajja fraterna. Jidher ċar li din hi krizi fi hdan l-Ordni kollu. Din hi krizi li lkoll kemm ahna qed niffaċċjaw u ngorru il-konsegwenzi tagħha. Il-Ġeneral stqarr ċar u tond li ma teżistix hajja frangiskana mingħajr fraternita'. Niftakru li fil-bidu tas-sejha tiegħu, Missierna Frangisku jirringrazzja l'Alla għad-don ta' l-ahwa. Huti, jekk nippruvaw naharbu din ir-realta' tal-hajja fraterna, inkunu qed naghmlu farsa shiha mis-sejha Frangiskana. Hemm bżonn li lkoll kemm ahna nhossuna responsabbli minn din il-krizi. Ma naqghux fl-iżball li nipprovaw niskużaw lilna nfusna, jew infarfru minn fuq spallejna kull sens ta' responsabilita' u nserrħu rasna. Din is-sitwazzjoni mhix sempliċement frott tal-mentalita' tallum, iżda wkoll hi frott tanuqqas ta' rieda tajba minn naħa tagħna lkoll. L-istess struttura ta' l-Ordni diġa' toffrilna għajjnuna biżżejjed biex ahna nkunu nistgħu naslu ngħixu il-vera hajja fraterna, l-Ewkaristija komunitarja, it-talb tas-siġhat, il-Lectio Divina, l-irtiri lokali u l-irtiri tas-sena fil-Porziuncola, il-kapitli lokali, il-Community Day, l-ikel u rikreazzjoni flimkien. Dawn huma kollha mumentu ta' grazzji mis-sema li jghinuna biex ngħixu il-hajja fraterna. L-iżball hu li hafna drabi naqgħu vittmi tar-rutina u ma nkunux miftuħa għall-idejat godda kif nistgħu nagħtu hajja ġdida lil dawn il-mumentu ta' fraternita'.

Bla dubju ta' xejn l-ewwel responsabilita' taqa' fuqi personali bħala Ministru Provincjal u flimkien miegħi l-

Gwardjani. Ikollna nammettu li ahna wkoll hafna drabi naslu biex naqtgħu qalbna meta thossok imdawwar minn tant nuqqas ta' rieda tajba. Imma rridu nissieltu magħna nfusna, huma x'inhuma ċ-ċirkustanzi, il-hajja fraterna għandha tinbena fuq dawn l-atti komuni. Kull hidma ohra li nwettqu, tista tkun l-aktar haġa qaddisa, jekk ma tkunx frott ta' hajja fraterna, ma tistax twettaq il-ġid kollu marbut magħha.

Min naħa tal-Provincja inwghedtkom li se naghmlu dak kollu li nistgħu biex naslu ngħixu l-veru spirtu ta' dan il-Kapitlu li għadu kemm ġie fit-tmiem tiegħu. Bil-koperazzjoni tas-Segretarjat tal-Formazzjoni bdejna dawn is-Seminars Provincjali. Bejn is-7 u 9 ta' Jannar tas-sena 2007, se niċcelebraw il-Kapitlu tal-Hsajjar. Hija grazzja mis-sema li se jerga' jkollna fostna lil ex-Ministru Ġeneral Fra Giacomo Bini, OFM biex janimana matul il-jiem tal-kapitlu. Matul il-jiem tar-Randan li ġej, kif jitolbu il-Kostituzjonijiet ta' l-Ordni, jiena se naghmel il-Vista Kanonika fil-Kunventi tal-Provincja. Aktar 'il quddiem tirċievu aktar dettalji dwar dan kollu.

Huti, fuq il-kelma tal-Ministru Ġeneral, ejjew inkomplu bi spirtu pożittiv inharsu lejn il-gejjieni. Ejjew napprezzaw il-barka li Alla ta lill-Provincja tagħna bil-prezenza ta' żewġ studenti professi temporanji u żewġ postulanti. Ejjew napprezzaw is-sabih u t-tajjeb ta' xulxin. Ejjew ngħixu aktar bħall-ahwa biex flimkien niffaċċjaw l-isfidi tal-hajja tallum u flimkien inkomplu dejjem napprezzaw kemm habbna Alla meta minn rajh għogħbu jsehilna biex ngħixu aktar qrib tiegħu fuq l-eżempju u t-tagħlim ta' Frangisku t' Assisi.

Il-Mulej jagħtikom is-sliem tiegħu.

Mill-gurnali lokali

Talking Point

We cannot pretend there's no racism in our Church

Dionysius Mintoff, OFM

The General Chapter of the Franciscans held in Assisi gave to the friars all over the world useful material for reflection on essential elements of our heritage, an examination of conscience and an impulse toward putting the proposals of our option for the poor into practice.

For an ever-increasing number of friars, the poor man is not just a brother but a "preferred" brother. Some communities have handed over friaries to be centres for the recovery of alcoholics and of drug addicts and to provide shelter to asylum seekers.

Concerned with the current crisis in migration in Malta, the Peace Lab stimulated awareness of the situation in local and foreign media. The Peace Lab also initiated legal proceedings to protect migrants from deportation when it was not fashionable to do so. For the past four years, it has extended to them real time assistance in language orientation, sport, medical care, trade training and insertion in the job market besides a place of worship both for Christians and Muslims.

This is solid contribution far away from seminars and discussions which can only produce printed paper or loud noise without any credibility. But day in day out we have to

avoid the sprouting jungle of racial prejudice. Because in Malta our Church is very slow to prompt any action for justice and peace because this could complicate the life of our Church or that of our groups or Christian communities and therefore, it would be better to stay on the sidelines.

Can we pretend there is no racism in our Church? The lack of sensitivity to ethnic make up is not linked to a particular parish, but is a Church wide phenomenon. Attending a recent seminar run by a Church organisation, an African young girl complained she was the only representative of an ethnic community. Certainly, in colour terms she was right, as the work group did seem to be made up of a sea of white guests and participants involved in migration.

The bigger question though was how representative was she of ethnic make up of those who work as teachers or attend Maltese Catholic schools as students.

It is not just in Catholic schools though. What of the Catholic press - how many people of ethnic minorities do they employ? Maybe, if there

were at least one or two people from ethnic groups employed in a position of opinion maker or in a position of influence, the Catholic papers might have a less white establishment view of the world.

What of the other parts of the Church life? How many black bishops were present in the European Conference of Bishops held lately in St Petersburg?

Locally, it is true that Archbishop Mercieca has several times called on people to reach out and make those coming in welcome. But it is equally true that the Church in Malta has to look seriously at its structure and seek to address the problem. Seminars run by Church organisations and held in four-star hotels or national shrines crop up like mushrooms every season but did any one of them mark any evident contrast similar to the multi-ethnic congregation who attended the migrants' Mass celebrated by Cardinal Murphy O'Connor on May Day this year?

As more migrants come into this country, ***ikompli f'paġna***

Xi jfisser il-Milied Frangiskan

Norbert Ellul-Vincenti, OFM

"Mela mhux Milied wiehed hawn?" nisthajjel ikun hawn min jghid meta jara t-titlu ta' dan l-artiklu.

Mistoqsija f'waqtha, għax wara kollox, tajjeb li naghmlu mistoqsijiet fuq kollox. Anzi biex inkunu Nsara tajba, irridu naghmlu hafna mistoqsijiet, għax b'hekk inkunu Nsara hajjin u mhux In-sara sponza – nemnu u naghmlu minghajr ma' nafu ghaliex.

Niftehmu, mhux dejjem insibu t-twegiba mill-ewwel, għax hajjitna hija mistoqsija waħda, tiftixa, pellegrinagg, lejn

id-dar tas-sigurta' u tal-verita' ahharija. Imma biex naslu hemm, bil-mod, hej. U kemm tweghir u tiftix għal twegibiet!

Dak hu s-sabih tal-hajja – li hajjitna hija avventura u tajjeb li nghixuha bhala avventura. Irridu nkunu kuragguzi, u nissograw, infittxu u nistaqsu, sakemm nibdew naraw id-dawl.

Hekk kien San Frangisk meta għamel l-ewwel Presepju. Mhux bhal tagħna, gagazza, karti, gablow, figurini u pasturi. San Frangisk għamel l-ewwel presepju

meta kien għad hadd ma' għamel wiehed. U għamlu haj, bin-nies u bhejjem ta' vera. X'ried jagħmel? Spettaklu, teatrin? folklore?

Iva. Spettaklu. Imma spettaklu bi skop, mhux għalih innifsu biss, u mhux biex jibda xi haġa li kellha tgħaddi fil-folklore u tispikka f'dak li aħna ngħidulu presepju Naplitan bil-figuri tal-hajja tal-kampanja, u l-bir, u s-sette dormienti, u x-xabbatur ... fost hafna affarijiet oħra.

Mela x'ried jagħmel?

Ried jagħmel dak li aħna suppost naghmlu, meta narmaw il-presepju u meta niċcelebraw il-Milied. Ried jiftakar u ried ifakkar lill-ħutu l-bnedmin, li Alla sar bniedem ċkejken lanqas jaf ilissen kelma, u lanqas jaf jimxi minghajr ma' jaqa'. U Dan Alla sar bniedem biex jurina kemm iħobbna.

Jekk ninsew dak, ninsew mhux biss ghaliex qed niccelebraw il-Milied, imma niccelebraw bhala vaganza minghajr kontenut.

Min jibghat kartolina bil-Merry Christmas, DAK li jkun qed jagħmel. Mela l-Milied jigi biex inkun merry, minghajr ma nafu ghaliex? Għax ma



nsemmux lit-tarbija Ġesu' fil-kartolini kollha li nibagħtu? U jekk stess dawn ma jkollhomx kliem religjuz, għax ikunu magħmulin minn nies li ma jemmnux jew għax ma jafux x'jemmnu - għaliex aħna m'għandniex inniz-zlu fuq il-kartolina il-barka tat-Tarbija Ġesu'? Jekk mhux stampat isem Ġesu', nizzlu int. Mela tibqa' hmar u tikkuntenta bis-silg, bič-červa, bil-Father Christmas u bil-pitirross?

U meta niltaqgħu, ha nesprimu il-ferh ta' Kristu, u mhux izjed bil-merry. Jekk hawn min jisthi, imma aħna li veru nemmnu m'għandniex għalfejn nisthi ma' hadd. U min jirrispettana, jirrispetta anke it-twemmin u l-ferh tagħna – fi Kristu Ġesu', mwieled tarbija.

Dun Ġorġ, li nittamaw dalwaqt li se jkun kanonizzat, fehmu dan, meta dahhal f'Malta il-purčissjoni tal-Bambin Ġesu', u ta spinta lill-presepju. Hekk sewwa. Dun Ġorġ fehem x'inhu l-Milied Frangiskan. Kemm għandna għalfejn niringrazzjaw lill-MUSEUM.

San Frangisk, biddel hajtu meta beda jemmen il-vangelu, u beda jaqrah u jitolbu. Ma kellu ebda ħsieb li jbiddel lil hadd u lanqas li jikkritika lill-Knisja. Aghmel it-tajjeb u n-nies ingibdet warajh. Kif fakkarna l-Papa dan l-aħhar, beda jibni il-Knisja li qed taqa' f'kull wiehed u waħda minna. Hekk kien talbu jagħmel il-Kurčifiss ta' San Damian. Frang-

isku fehem kemm Alla jhobbna, u sogħbbih bil-kbir jara li Alla ma kienx mahbub bizzejjed. Kien jibki hafna: "l-Imhabba mhiex mahbuba!" Hekk kien jgħajjat, u jixher.

U beda jhobb. U baqa' jhobb, u kiber fl-imhabba, tant li kulhadd sar hija u ohti għalih. Anke l-hmar, u anke l-Mewt, ix-Xemx u l-Qamar. Għalhekk kien ihobb il-holqien kollu u mhux sempliciment għax kien ambjentalista. Għalhekk kien poeta, kantant, zeffien, ferhan, fqir imma kollox tiegħu. Id-dinja kienet kollha tiegħu u d-dinja kollha griet għal warajh. Hawn Malta biss, bejn patrijiet, sorijiet, u terzjarji (ordni sečular) hawn fuq l-elf Frangiskan. Biex ma nsemmux il-fans ta' San Frangisk.

Tghid għandna kuragg dan il-Milied ničcelebrawh bi Kristu Ġesu' fostna u mhux biss bit-tizjin u b'ħafna ikel żejjed u xorb u jekk mhux ukoll iljieli minn jaf fejn u kif!

Allura ftit qabel ma miet, San Frangisk talab lil wiehed habib tiegħu fi Grečcio, Giovanni Velita, biex jisilfu għar bil-bhejjem u t-tiben halli jič-čelebra l-Milied hemm – f'post jixbah fejn twieled Ġesu', għeri, fqir, tarbija.

U hekk għamel. Ma' qaddisx hu, għax hu kien baqa' djaknu, għax ħass li ma kienx dehen li jkun sačerdot. Imma hu ipprietka. U xi prietka

għamel, fejn fakkarhom li Ġesu' sar tarbija biex kulhadd, imma kulhadd, jersaq għandu u ma jibzax minnu. U f'hin minnhom, f'dak l-għar bit-tiben u tarbija finta, baqra u ħmara ta' veru u bosta nies, f'hin minnhom in-nies lemhet fidejn San Frangisk mhux pupu imma tarbija ta' veru, u fehmu li Ġesu' kien twieled fidejh.

Dak kien l-ewwel presepju ħaj. Kien ifisser ħafna dak il-presepju. Tghid għandna kuragg dan il-Milied ničcelebrawh bi Kristu Ġesu' fostna u mhux biss bit-tizjin u b'ħafna ikel žejjed u xorb u jekk mhux ukoll iljieli minn jaf fejn u kif!

Tajjeb li għall-Milied naħsbu f'dawk li ittra-sukrajna, spečjalment tal-familja tagħna, li naħfru lil min ma nkellmex, li naħsbu fil-fqar jew dawk li m'għandhomx ħafna ikel żejjed, jew xejn, dawk li m'għandhomx min jistedinhom għall-ikel, dawk li ma jistgħux jimxu, il-morda, u anke l-mejtin tal-familja tagħna li għad-dewlna l-fidi f'Ġesu'. Anke meta nidhlu fil-Knisja għall-Quddies, niftakru li kienu ta' qabilna li bnewhilna, probabbli, u aħna qed ingawdu mis-sagrificčji tagħhom, biex issa nkantaw, "Ninni Ġesu' Bambin".

Bil-ħaqq, niftakru wkoll f'Dun Karm mela li ħallielna tant innijiet sbieh.

Il-Milied it-tajjeb, mela u j'Alla f'qalbek tinsel il-pači ta' Ġesu' Tarbija.

Il-Migja tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani f'Tas-Sliema 13 ta' Novembru 1881

Ġuzepp Vella, OFM

(jissokta mill-ahħ ar ħ ar ħ a ta' L-AĦBAR)

Għadew sitt xhur mill-ftuh, it-
tberik u l-wasla tal-vara fil-
knisja tagħna. Matul dawn ix-
xhur saret ħidma wieqa bejn
il-Kumitat tal-Konfraternita',
Dun Pawl u l-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof
biex il-kura spiritwali tan-nies
ta' dawn l-inħawi tghaddi f'
idejn il-Patrijiet tagħna.

Sa mill-1865 il-Patrijiet
Minuri ġew mitluba, permezz
ta' ittra miktuba minn neguzjant
Giuseppe Galea, biex jġu Tas-

Sliema ħalli jagħtu servizz fil-
knisja ta' Stella Maris li kienet
imbriet xi 10 snin qabel. Xi
kundizzjonijiet li kienu saru f' dik
l-istedina, għal dak iż-żminijiet,
kienu ffit iebes biex jġu
aċċettati.(1) Imma b' daqshekk
ma naqasx l-interess li l-
Patrijiet jġu jaħdmu f' Tas-
Sliema li kienet qegħda
tizviluppa b' ritmu mgħaġġel

Veru li l-Madonna riedet
lil Patrijiet tagħna f-Tas-Sliema.
Fl-1877, meta bdiet timbena l-
knisja tagħna, P. Tonin M.

Cesal O.F.M. ġie maħtur
superjur tal-Patrijiet Minuri
Maltin.(2) Permezz ta' Dun Pawl
Vella, Terzjarju Frangiskan, u ta'
l-istess imsemmi Giuseppe
Galea li inżerta membru fil-
kumitat flimkien ma'
Michelangelo Borg, membru
ieħor tal-Kumitat, u li kien ir-ra
ġel ta' oħt P.Cesal seta jibda l-ħ
idma biex iwitti t-triq ħalli l-
Patrijiet jġu jwettqu l-
apostolat tagħhom fost il-
poplu slimiz.(3)

It-tratattivi

Kien f' Diċembru 1880
meta P. Tonin għamel l-ewwel
pass billi mar ikellem lil kumitat
tal-Konfraternita' tal-Madonna.
Il-Kumitat wera li kien favor din
l-idea. L-unika kundizzjoni
kienet li l-kumitat jibqa' jġi
rikonoxxut bħala kumitat tal-
Konfraternita' tal-Madonna tas-
Sacro Cuor kif fil-fatt kien.(4)
Wara din il-laqgħa l-interess
tal-Patrijiet kiber tant li P.Gian
Pawl Deguara O.F.M.beda ji
ġbor il-flus ħalli jghin lil Dun
Pawl u l-kumitat fil-bini tal-
knisja. Fl-10 ta' Jannar 1881 P.
Tonin flimkien ma' Giuseppe
Galea mar il-Kurja għand l-



Arcisqof biex jitolbuh ufficcjalment li l-knisja, meta tkun lesta, tghaddi f' idejn il-Patrijiet. L-Arcisqof qallhom li t-talba ghandha ssir lil Kapitu tal-Katidral ghax l-art kienet tieghu.(5) Fix-xahar ta' wara P.Tonin Cesal O.F.M. gie Tas-Sliema biex flimkien ma Dun Pawl, il-Perit Gian-Domenico Debono u membri oħra tal-Kumitat jagħzel il-post fejn seta' l-aħjar jimbena l-kunvent. Intgħazel il-post fejn jinsab illum.(6) F' Marzu ta' l-1881 P.Tonin attenda għall-laqgħa mal-Kumitat tal-Konfraternita' li fiha inqraw l-istatuti li ġew emendati skond ix-xewqa ta' P.Tonin.(7) F'Mejju 1881 il-Kapitu Katedrali ta l-art, b'xejn, lil P. Tonin fejn kien se jibni l-kunvent b' cens ta' lira fis-sena. (8) Wara ftit jiem beda jinqala' inkwiet ghax l-Arcisqof ried li jzomm il-propjeta ta' l-art u li l-Patrijiet ikollhom biss l-użu tagħha. Kundizzjoni bħal din ma setgħetx tiġi aċċettata mill-Patrijiet.(9) Wisq aktar li jkunu dependenti mill-Kumitat tal-Konfraternita.(10) P.Tonin wasal biex qata' qalbu għal kollox u kien pront ta lura l-art lil Kattidral li kienu tawh.(11) Huwa għarraf lis-Segretarju tal-Konfraternita' li ma kienx beħsiebu jaċċetta li jiehu f'idejh it-tmexxija tal-knisja.(12) L-inkwiet aktar kiber tant li dehret kitba mal-ħitan, f' Tas-Sliema ,kontra l-kumitat tal-Konfraternita'.(13)

Wara ftit xhur li l-knisja kienet miftuħa u bdiet tiffunzjona, Dun Pawl, beda jħossu għajjen minħabba l-marda li kien isofri u t-taħbit li kellu biex imexxi l-knisja u l-Konfraternita' kif ukoll minħabba persuni kritiċi u esigenti. Dun Pawl hass li kellu jirriżenja. Għalhekk f' Settembru iddeċieda li jmur iġharraf lil Arcisqof li f' Ottubru kien beh siebu jirriżenja(14). L-Arcisqof qallu biex jissaporti ftit ieħor ghax kien wasal fi ftehim dwar l-ghotja tal-knisja lil Patrijiet Minuri. L-Arcisqof ta l-permess li jista jxandar din l-aħbar lil poplu. Kien il-ħames Hadd ta' Settembru 1881 li Dun Pawl ħabbar ir-riżenja tieghu u li l-kura spiritwali kienet se tghaddi f' idejn il-Frangiskani. Huwa rringrazzja lil kulħadd speċjalment lil shabu tal-kumitat u lil dawk li hadmu mieghu fil-qrib matul il-bini tal-knisja (15).

Wara din l-aħbar P.Tonin ried jara kif jagħmel biex jerga' jakkwista l-art li kien għazel u li kien ta lura lil Katidral. Sadanitant il-Kattidral kien biegh parti mill-art lil haddieħ or. Imma veru li l-Madonna riedet lil Patrijiet tagħna proprju fil-knisja tagħna. P.Tonin irnexxielu jerga' jiehu l-art u li parti minnha kienet diġa' mbniet. Imma l-qalb ġeneruza tal-persuni li kienu bnew iddeċidew li jċedu l-art tagħhom lil Patrijiet.(16)

Il-Miġja tal-Patrijiet

Wara r-riżenja ta' Dun Pawl, il-Konfraternita' hatret lil P.Tonin Cesal bħala d-Direttur spiritwali.(17) Fil-11 ta' Novembru 1881 P. Tonin, fuq parir tal-Kunsill tieghu aċċetta l-ghotja tal-knisja taht dawn il-kundizzjonijiet :

- 1.Il-knisja bil-propjeta' tagħha tghaddi f' idejn il-Patrijiet Minuri
- 2.Il-propjeta' ta' l-altar ta' San Ġuzepp tibqa f'idejn l-Arcisqof.
- 3.Il-paneġierku ta' filghaxija tal-festa titulari jingħata mill-Arcisqof
- 4.kull 1 ta' Ġunju tingħata xema' ta' ratlejn lill-Arcisqof.
- 5.Il-Patrijiet, jekk ikun hemm bżonn, ikollhom jaċċettaw bla kundizzjoni li l-knisja ssir Parroċċa..(18)

Il-kuntratt sar fit-12 ta' Novembru 1881 quddiem in-nutar kjeriku u Kancellier tal-kurja Ġuzeppi Rossi.(19) l-ghada li sar il-kuntratt, jigi f'ier 13 ta' Novembru 1881, il-Patrijiet rifsu f' Tas-Sliema. Il-ħolma ta' P.Tonin Cesal ofm u ta' ħafna slimizi saret realta'. Dakinhar fit-2,45 p.m. P. Tonin wasal ix-Xatt ta' Tas-Sliema flimkien ma' għadd ġmielu ta' Patrijiet. Hemm sab jilqugh Dun Pawl Vella flimkien mal-membri tal-Kumitat tal-Konfraternita'. Ilkoll imxew sal-knisja halli ssir iċ-ċerimonja tal-ghotja tal-knisja. Fil-knisja sar diskors ta' merħba lil P.Tonin u l-Patrijiet l-oħra mir-Rev. Dun Pawl Vella. Bħala delegat ta' Mons. Arcisqof Carmelo Xikluna ta l-

imfietah tal-knisja lil P.Tonin. Kien ġest simboliku li t-tmexxija spiritwali tal-poplu ta' dawn l-inhawi għaddiet fil-kura tal-Patrijiet Franġiskani. Wara, P.Tonin wieġeb b'diskors qasir. Il-Viċi Direttur spiritwali tal-Konfraternita', Dun Antonio Vella, għamel priedka tal-okkażjoni. Wara, l-orkestra tal-Mro. Antonio Nani daqqew u kantaw l-Antifona, it-Te Deum u inghatat il-Barka Sagramentali. (20) Minn dik il-lejla memorabbli l-ewwel Patrijiet marru joqgħodu fid-dar nru 43 fi triq San Giovanni Battista. Din kienet mislufa mis-sur Carmelo Abdilla sakemm imbena l-kunvent. (21) Irhama li hemm ma din id-dar tfakkar din il-ġrajja unika fl-istorja ta' Tas-Sliema u fl-istorja tal-Patrijiet Franġiskani maltin. (22)

Dawn il-ġrajjet li semmejna kemm il-darba issemmew u inkitbu għax huma parti mill-istorja tal-knisja għażiza tagħna. Kienet haġa xierqa li wara 125 sena nerġġhu niftakru fihom u ngħixhuhom. Ġrajjet minsuġa minn missirijietna li fasslu id-destin ta' din il-parti ta' Tas-Sliema. Il-Patrijiet fidili għal karizma ta' Paċi u Ġid qatt ma ħarbu mill-appostolat fejjiedi li dejjem wettqu anke fl-eqqel ġranet ta' l-aħhar gwerra dinijja. Huma baqgħu dejjem viċin il-poplu. Għandna għax inkunu kburin li l-ulied il-faqajjar f' Assisi kienu dejjem denji għassiesa tas-santwarju

tagħna u li d-devozzjoni lejn il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor ħabbewha, għożżewha u xerrduha biex il-Madonna tkun it-tama ta' dawk li jersqu lejha. Mill-banda l-oħra il-Madonna bierket lil Paroċċa tagħna u l-ħidma tal-Patrijiet b' għadd kbir ta' vokazzjonijiet saċerdotali, reliġjuzi kemm fi ħdan l-Ordni Franġiskan, Qassisin jew ordnijiet reliġjuzi oħra.

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20. Dun Pawl Vella opus Cit. P.90; Amico del Popolo 15-XI-1881 P.223.
21. P.Mikiel Catania Opus Cit. P.51; dwar in-numru tad-dar huwa tagħrif mogħti minn P. Salv Bonnici OFM 1970.
22. Kronaka Kunvent Sliema Vol. III p.9



Ċelebrazzjoni tal-125 Sena tal-Patrijiet f'tas-Sliema

George Bugeja, OFM



Nhar it-13 ta' Novembru li għadda kien il-jum li fih aħna l-Patrijiet wasalna u ġejna mogħtija f'idejna l-kura pastorali tal-knisja u tal-poplu ta' tas-Sliema. Dan seħħ b'inizjattiva ta' Fra Tonin Cesal OFM, bniedem mill-izjed ħabrieċi, li verament ħabb u ħadem biex jara futur fil-hidma tal-Patrijiet kemm f'Malta kif ukoll f'Għawdex.

Biex nfakkru din il-

ġrajja għażilna li ma' nagħmlux xi festi kbar u parties, kif donnu drajna nagħmlu, imma fakkarna din il-ġrajja billi fil-ġurnata proprja, il-Ministru Provinċjal mexxa quddiesha ta' tifikira. Matul il-Ġimgħa għet iċċelebrata l-Ewkaristija fid-djar ta' kull anżjan u anżjana li hemm fil-parroċċa. Irrid ngħid li l-apprezzament tal-morda u tal-familji tagħhom għal din il-ħaġa kien kbir. Għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' dawn il-quddies taw is-sehem tagħhom dawn il-patrijiet: Pawl Galea, Marcellino Micallef, Martin Coleiro, Dijonisju Mintoff, Tony Briffa, Joe Caruana, Alex Borg, Anton Farrugia, Norbert E. Vincenti, Ġużepp B. Xuereb, Marcello Ghirlando, Sebastjan Camilleri, Eddie Pace,

Christopher Farrugia u jiena.

F'din l-okkazzjoni l-komunita' tas-sorijiet frangiskani tal-Qalb ta' Ġesu', stiednet lill-fraternita' flimkien mal-Ministru Provinċjal. għall-ikla fil-kunvent tagħhom. Kienet ikla kif jafu joffru s-sorijiet.

Iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet għalaqnihom b'Quddiesha li għet mmexxija mill-Eċċ. Tiegħu Mons. Mario Grech, Isqof t'Għawdex. Kien mument verament sabih kemm għalina kif ukoll għan-nies li kienu preżenti fil-knisja li mhux biss ingħaqdu magħna f'din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni imma wkoll apprezzaw il-fatt li setgħu jiltaqgħu ma' l-Isqof.



informazzjoni

Seminar

On Saturday 28 October the Franciscans gathered at Porziuncola Retreat House at Bahar ic-Caghaq for a half-day seminar. The seminar started with a prayer meeting organized by the Franciscan candidates in formation.

The Minister Provin-



cial then delivered a talk regarding the Extraordinary General Chapter held in Assisi during the month of September. He spoke about his personal experience in the Chapter and about the major problems and challenges which the Order faces today.

He also mentioned the task which the Ministers Provincial have, namely that of being animators in their Provinces. For this reason the Order invited all the Ministers present to organize a Chapter of Mats in their respective

provinces. In the Maltese Franciscan Province this Chapter of Mats is planned for January 2007. The friars present also had the opportunity to ask questions to the Minister Provincial.

After a short break Fr. George Aquilina OFM, historian of the Franciscan Province, spoke about some historical aspects of our Province and about the importance of the Provincial Archives.



"Il-Frangiskani" back again

The Vocations news leaflet is back again! "il-Frangiskani" is revamped in its structure and in its mission statement. In fact this time the newsletter is in full colour and it will be reserved only to the Vocation News. Although it has been reduced to four pages, it has various news items

regarding what is currently happening in the Franciscan Vocation sphere. It is also giving some space for those who are considering their call and to various experience of those who are in the initial formation. This newsletter will be as other newsletters online on this site and also on



the Vocations site www.ofmvok.org for free to download and read, in Maltese Language.

Rikoverat għand il-Little Sisters of the Poor

Fra Ġwann Schranz, OFM jinsab rikoverat għand il-Little Sisters of the Poor, il-Hamrun

Illum Fra Ġwann għandu l-eta' ta' 85 sena u matul haġtu wettaq diversi

hidmiet pastorali kemm f'Malta u anke fil-missjoni. Għal dawn l-aħħar snin huwa kien membru tal-fraternita' ta' tas-Sliema.

Ta' min jgħid ukoll li fid-Dar tal-Kleru Christus

Sacerdos hemm erba' patrijiet oħra. Infakkru li huwa fid-dmir li nżuruhom u nitolbu għalihom.

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. *Cicero*

Itemm l-impenn ta' Manutensjoni tar-Segretarju Ġenerali refittorju

Fra Sandro Overend temm l-impenn tiegħu ta' Segretarju Ġenerali ta' l-Ordni. Fra Seán Collins gie maħtur is-Segretarju l-ġdid (ara Atti tad-Definitorju Ġenerali). Fra Sandro se jingħaqad mal-fraternita' ta' Għawdex.

Ir-refittorju tal-kunvent tal-Belt ingħata dehra tassew ġdida wara ġim-ġhat ta' hidma biex saret il-manutensjoni li tant kien jenħtieg. Bhekk tlesta l-proġett tal-manutensjoni tal-kunvent kollu.

ikompli minn paġna 13

Christ by following the footprints of Francis, Clare and Elizabeth evoke the very singular personality of Elizabeth during this jubilee year in order to change ourselves into in-

struments of peace and joy through the knowledge and admiration of this figure, and let us learn to put a little balm on the wounds of our milieu, to humanise our circumstances and to wipe away some tears. Let us pour out our hearts where the mercy of the Father does not reign. May the commitment which stimulated Elizabeth stimulate our commitment, her example and intercession illuminate our path towards the Father, the source of all love: the Good, all Good, supreme good; quietude and joy.



Quddiesa għall-aħwa mejtin tal-Provinċja

Nhar ir-Sibt, 11 ta' Novembru 2006, l-aħwa tal-Provinċja ltaqgħu fil-kappella tal-Provinċja fiċ-Ċimiterju ta' Marija Addolorata u giet iċċelebrata l-Ewkaristija għall-erwieh ta' hutna l-patrijiet li jinsabu midfuna fil-kappella u fil-qabar tal-provinċja fiċ-ċimiterju ta' Għawdex.

Gozo Bishop on Private Visit to Bethlehem

The Bishop of Gozo, Mgr. Mario Grech, together with his secretary, Fr. Eddie Zammit, were in Bethlehem on a personal visit on 21-24 November. The purpose of the visit was that of collaborating with a local TV station in order to launch a documentary about Bethlehem during the Christmas season. Among the other commitments during this personal visit, the Bishop also met all the Maltese religious living in

Bethlehem and Jerusalem, particularly Fr. Noel Muscat OFM, Master of Novices at the Nativity Franciscan friary in Bethlehem. He also met Fr. Twanny Chircop OFM, Commissary of the Holy Land, who happened to be in Jerusalem for the International Congress of the Commissaries of the Holy Land organized by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. The Bishop also had meetings with the Latin



Patriarch of Jerusalem Mgr. Michel Sabbah, and with the parish priest of Bethlehem, Fr. Amjad Sabbara OFM, and he celebrated Mass privately in the Grotto of the Nativity.

Festi tal-Milied 2006

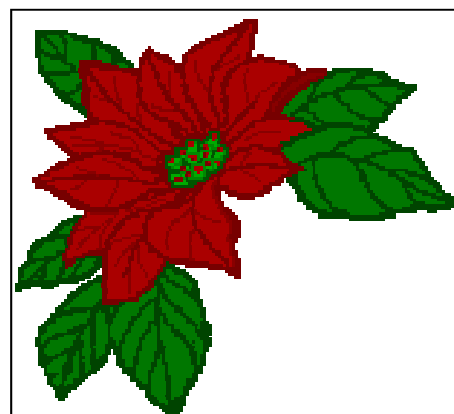
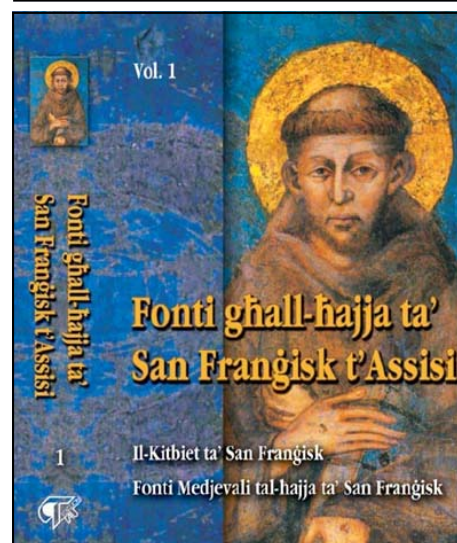


**Ghall-Ahwa kollha
tal-Provinċja
Il-Gimgha, 22 ta' Diċembru
Fid-Dar tal-Formazzjoni
Rabat
10.30 am**

**Ghall-Ġenituri u Qraba
L-Erbgha, 27 ta' Diċembru
Porziuncola Retreat House
6.00 pm**

1st Prize at the Malta Book Fair

Fonti għall-Hajja ta' San Frangisk t'Assisi" (The Sources for the Life of Saint Francis of Assisi), has been awarded first prize in the translations category of books at the 22nd Malta Book Fair, which was held this week at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. This is a two-volume publication was published last year by the Maltese Franciscan Province and Edizzjoni TAU, under the care of Fr. Noel Muscat OFM. It includes medieval biographies of St. Francis, with introductions, notes, and indexes. The translators worked over a period of nearly 20 years, and were Fr. Joseph Benedict Xuereb OFM, the late Fr. Marjanu Vella OFM, and Fr. Noel Muscat OFM.



TAU Book Fair

The last weekend of November in our Franciscan Friary at Rabat was characterised by the TAU Book fair that the TAU Edition has organised for the first time.

People had the opportunity to see all the publications together and buy all the books at a special price. It was a success because during the whole weekend, especially before and after Mass entered the fair to have a look and buy. During this book fair the Franciscan Sources of St. Francis and St. Clare was sold at a special price. During this three-day fair, together with books there were also paintings by Joseph Cilia, one of our postulants, religious articles and Christmas cards, which made the atmosphere more welcoming.

The helpers at the fair included Clint Micallef and Andrea Diacono and also our postulants Aaron



Abdilla and Joseph Cilia, and students Walter Vassallo and Joseph Ciappara. If one wishes to

have a look at our Franciscan bookshop one can buy also online at tau.hanut.com.

tau.hanut.com

Kunsill Pastorali Djoċesan 2006 - 2009

Mons. Arcisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca, innominat lil Fra Anton Farrugia, OFM bhala membru tal-Kunsill Pastorali Djoċesan għas-snin 2006-2009. Barra l-membri *ex officio* u l-membri eletti ta' kull Unita', Mons. Arcisqof hatar diversi membri, fosthom lil Fra Anton.

He who does nothing for others does nothing for himself. Goethe

**F1-okkażjoni tal-festa tal-Qaddisin ta' l-Ordni,
il-fraternita' tal-Ħamrun iċċelebrat**

festafrangiskana



Fi triq Villambrosa l-
Ħamrun hemm tlett
komunitajiet frangiskani:
is-sorijiet tal-Qalb ta'
Ġesu' li jgħixu fi Fra Diegu
Home, is-sorijiet tal-Qalb
Bla Tebġha ta' Marija,
magħrufin ukoll ta' l-
Egittu u l-patrijiet.

Nhar l-Erbgħa, 29 ta'
Novembru, fl-okkażjoni
tal-festa tal-Qaddisin ta' l-
Ordni għat-tielet sena
konsekuttiva giet
organizzata l-

festafrangiskana fil-
kunvent tal-patrijiet.
Barra l-aħwa tal-patrijiet
minuri, kien hemm ukoll
is-sorijiet taż-żewġ
komunitajiet frangiskani,
il-Ministru Provinċjal Fra
Paul Galea, il-mastru Fra
Stephen Magro, l-istudenti
u l-postulanti.

Il-lejla frangiskana
bdiet b'mument ta' talb fil-
kappella tal-Madonna tas-
Sokkors Perpetwu. Fra
Charles Grech u Fra Paul

Attard animaw it-talba ta'
l-għasar, fejn din it-talba
tal-Knisja giet
ippreżentata wkoll
permezz ta' *powerpoint*.
Wara saret laqgħa soċjali
fejn thejjiet *pastanight* fir-
refittorju li kienet
koordinata mill-Gwardjan
Fra Marcellino Micallef.

Kienet lejla sabiħa u
ta' ferħ li l-aħwa
frangiskani jiltaqħu biex
jitolbu u jieklu flimkien.

Manutensjoni tal-kunvent tal-Ħamrun

Wara l-manutensjoni li saret tal-koppla tal-knisja, il-kappella tas-Sokkors u r-
refittorju tal-kunvent, qed isir xogħol ta' manutensjoni tal-kunvent kollu u li
għandu jitlesta qabel il-festi tal-Milied. Imbagħad f'Jannar se ssir kċina ġdida fil-
kunvent u f'Mejju jibda x-xogħol fuq il-kampnar u l-faċċata tal-knisja.

Il-Postulant Joseph Cilia jikteb dwar

Esperjenza fl-INSERM

Fit-tleffax ta' Ottubru, Fra Joseph Ciappara, Fra Walter Vassallo, Aaron Abdilla, u jiena ħadna sehem flimkien ma' postulanti, novizzi u neo-professi oħra, għall-ewwel *live-in* tal-INSERM għall-din is-sena. Kif wasalna il-Porziuncola Retreat House wiehed kien iħoss li kien hemm ċertu għaqda li personalment jiena bqajt skantat biha; bqajt skantat proprju għaliex għalkemm jiena personalment ma' kont naf lil hadd mill-postulanti, novizzi u neo-

professi lkoll konna ngjbu ruħna b'mod bħal li kieku ilna nafu lil xulxin żmien. Din hija impressjoni li laqitni b'mod pożittiv immens għaliex meta wiehed ikun għadu ġdid – bħalma wara kolli jiena jien – ikollu dik iċ-ċerta "biża (jekk tista' ssejthilha biża) li ma tintegrax u li ma tafx eżattament x' ser issib; pero' kien hemm attitudni ta' fraternita' bejn in-nies differenti, u din tghin hafna biex wiehed jinfetax u tghin ukoll biex lil wiehed iħossu f' ambjent komdu biex jesprimi l-ideat tiegħu personali u fuq kolli tghin biex wiehed jinfetax għall-oħrajn, u b' hekk ikun jista jgħati il-kontribut tiegħu.

Il-fraternita' kienet tinħass bejn il-membri tal-ordnijiet kollha, iżda kienet tinħass ferm



iktar bil-qawwi bejnietna u bejn il-membri tal-ordnijiet tal-Frangiskani Konventwali u tal-Kapuċċini. Din l-attitudni ta' għaqda u hbiberija rajtha kemm-il darba bejn l-ordni tal-Patrijiet Minuri, il-Patrijiet Minuri Konventwali u il-Patrijiet Minuri Kapuċċini, pero' din id-darba hassejtha hafna iktar qawwija u tista' tghid għet awtomatika. Din hija haġa ferm sabiħa għaliha bħalha postulant tal-Ordni tal-Patrijiet Minuri u nixtieq inżid li tagħtini hafna kuraġġ għall-futur.

Aħna il-pre-novizzi konna segwiti mill-psikologa Ms. Joyce Callus. Is-sinjura Callus għamlitilna sezzjonijiet bbażżati fuq il-psikoloġija tal-psikologu famuż Alfred Adler, li jikkellem hafna fuq kif wiehed għandu jgħib ruħu man-nies,

janalizza il-mod kif wiehed għandu jaġixxi fil-ħajja komunitarja u fuq kolli ipogġi hafna importanza kbira fuq il-mod kif wiehed jikkomunika ma' haddiehor. Dawn l-aħħar teoriji dwar il-komunikazzjoni jkomplu japprofondixxu fuq kemm wiehed jizbalja meta l-ewwel nett jgħudika lil persuna mill-ewwel impressjonijiet li jieħu tal-persuna, juru b' mod ċar kemm wiehed għandu l-ewwel u qabel kolli ikun pożittiv u mhux negattiv dan minħabba l-fatt li n-negattiva' mal-inqas tikka timbotta lin-nies.

Jiena personalment inħoss li jekk Alla jrid inkompli fuq it-triq li qbadt, huwa importanti jekk mhux essenzjali

li wiehed jifhem dawn it-teoriji u japplikahom ġa ladarba wiehed se jkun qed jagħmel xogħol li fih wiehed se jkun qed jieħu ħsieb il-ħajja tan-nies, naħseb li huwa importanti li wiehed ikun jaf kif il-psikoloġija tal-persuni taħdem bl-iskop li wiehed ikun iktar kapaci jagħti għajjnuna. Għaldaqstant, jiena nħoss ħafna li dawn it-*talks* li għamlitilna s-sinjura Callus kienu f'waqthom u ta' min wiehed iżommhom f' moħħu għall-futur. Dan il-*weekend*, għaliya personali kien suċċess kemm minn- naha ta' min segwiena kif ukoll minn-naħa ta min jorganizza. Dan għall-fatt li l-organizzaturi taw spazju kbir biex kull min kien prezenti ikun liberu biex jesprimi ruħu bil-mod tiegħu, bil-kariżma pertikolari li kull ordni jhaddan – eżempju ċar ta' dan kien it-talb, kemm il-lawdi kif ukoll il-

vespri u anke l-quddiesa li kienu jiġu animati min nies tal-varji ordnijiet differenti, animazzjoni li tinfirex mhux biss fejn jidhol kant u mużika iżda anke fid-disinn tal-kappella. Kwalita' li verament ħarget bil-qawwi kienet dik tar-rispett reċiproku bejnietna – dan deher ħafna fl-animazzjonijiet kif ukoll fil-mumententi tal-ħruġ meta integrajna flimkien, tkellimna bejnietna fuq is-sejħat personali tagħna, fil-qsim ta' esperjenzi diversi. F' dawn il-mumententi wiehed seta' josserva kemm jagħmel ġid, u kemm fih qawwa l-Ispiritu żagħżuġh, f' dan id-dawl wiehed proprju jista' jikkonferma il-kliem tal-Appostlu Ġwanni meta fl- ittra tiegħu jikteb: *"Qed nikteb lilkom żgħażaġh, għax fikom hemm is-saħħa, u l-kelma ta' Alla tgħix ġewwa fikom u intom*

għelibtu il-ħażin." (1 Gw 2:14)

Biex nikkonkludi, kien weekend informattiv, interessanti, mfawwar bl-Ispiritu ta' fraternita' u hbiberija reċiproka fejn wiehed seta' jara li għalkemm konna ħafna ordnijiet varji lkoll aħna mexjin wara Ragħaj, Salvatur u Missier wiehed – Ġesu', u huwa dan l-istess Ġesu' li lilna lkoll jgħaqqadna flimkien l-ewwelnett bħala nsara u aħwa fil-Knisja, jgħaqqadna flimkien bħala ulied l-istess Missier u fl-aħħar nett, jgħaqqadna lkoll flimkien bħala religjużi li "nimxu wara Ġesu' pur u fqajjar, nies imqaddsin u salvati bl-ubbidjenza sal-mewt tas-salib." (Special message of Pope John Paul II for World Day of Consecrated Life, 2nd February 2005)



ikompli minn paġna
the need to address racism in the Catholic Church becomes ever more pressing. The arrival of migrants offers a great opportunity for our Church to gain added vitality.

For this to happen though, the migrants have to be genuinely welcomed and integrated into the Church and not simply

Website ta' l-English Speaking Conference

The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

cfrit-esc-ofm

assimilated, where they attend Church but do not really become part of the community. If they do not feel part of the community they might drift elsewhere.

If members of ethnic minorities have long been present on construction sites, factory floors, and the refuse sector, why are they still a rare sight in our Church organisations that routinely bring them

into contact with Church congregations? As Benedict XVI put it: "Our mission is to serve people and to do this well, it is necessary that the composition or our apostolate force reflects that of the society in which we live."



Hawn jien Mulej

Postulant Aaron Abdilla

“Ġesu’ ħares lejha b’imħabba” (MK 10: 21). Nemmen li kull min jaċċetta is-sejha tal-Missier Qaddis bil-fors li l-ħarsa tal-imsejjah tkun iltaqgħet ma’ dik ta’ Ġesu’. Għaliya kien mument kruċjali meta l-ħarsa tiegħi ltaqgħet ma’ tiegħu, u mhux biss smajt is-sejha iżda ukoll seħħet il-konverżjoni tiegħi.

Ta’ 14-il sena jien għazilt li nsir aghma u neħhejt lil Alla mill-ħajja tiegħi. Wara sentejn indunajt li l-ħajja li kont għamilt jien għaliya tilfet kull sens u kull togħma. Kull ma bdejt immiss b’ idejja, bdejt narah vojtt u mdallam. Kont qed inhossni wahdi allavolja kont inkun imdawwar b’ ħafna persuni li kont insejħilhom “ħbieb”.

Meta għalaqt 16-il sena, ommi għarfet l-imħabba ta’ Alla lejha u bdiet tattendi adorazzjoni li kienet tkun immexxija minn patri Franġiskan. Darba ħaditni magħha għall-adorazzjoni. Għalkemm la kelli ħajra u anqas hegga mort xorta wahda. Meta wasalna u bdiet iċ-ċelebrazzjoni Ewkaristika, kien diġa’ qed inhossni ħuta barra mill-ilma. Bdejt inhossni ħafna aghar, u mohħi biss biex immur barra kif fil-fatt għamilt. Qattajt tliet kwarti tal-adorazzjoni barra, nixgħel

sigarett wara l-iehor. X’ ħin spiċċat l-adorazzjoni ommi qabditni minn idi, u b’ girja wahda biex żgur ma nährabx, ħaditni fis-sagrastija għand il-patri li kien qed immexxi l-adorazzjoni. Ommi b’ nofs dahqa staqsiet lill-patri jekk ma nistax noqgħod jumejn il-kunvent, u hu mill-ewwel ħataf l-okkazjoni. Riedni noqgħod hemm, imma jien x’ ħin smajt dan kollu bdejt naqbeż u nogħla u iktar ridt nitlaq ‘il barra. Matul dik il-ġimgħa kont erġajt iltaqajt ma’ Fr John aċċidental-ment aktar minn darba, u kien dejjem jiftagħli l-istedina biex immur jumejn il-kunvent imma jien ma riedx.

Erba’ ijiem wara, ġiet ommi fuqi u qallti li kienet sejra għal mument ta’ talb fi knisja. Fil-pront wegibtha li ma kontx ħa mmur għax ma ridtx nerġa’ niltaqa’ mal-patri. Imma hi qallti li din id-darba kienet sejra adorazzjoni oħra, u wara ftiit iddeċidejt li mmur magħha. Niftakar li jiena u l-familja poġġejna fuq il-bank tan-nofs, l-atmosfera kienet iġġgħelek tħossok komdu, b’ d-dawl u mużika baxxi li kienu qegħdin idoqqu xi zghazagh fil-ġemb tal-knisja. F’ ħin minnhom iż-zghazagh qamu jkantaw u d-dawl inxteghel kollu għax kienet ħa tibda il-Quddiesa.



X’ ħin wasal il-mument tal-paċi, wara li tajtha lil ommi, missieri u ħuti dort b’ idi ‘l barra biex nagħti l-paċi lil ta’ warajja, imma x’ ħin rajt li warajja kien hemm il-parti, ksaħt u bqajt qisni statwa b’ idi l-barra sakemm hu ħareġ qabadli idi, u qalli l-paċi miegħek. Jien dort nigri bla ma ħarist lejn wiċċu. Lanqas ridt nemmen li kien qiegħed propju warajja. Wara l-Quddies is-saċerdot ħareġ lil Ġesu’ espost. Dak il-ħin bdejt inhoss il-bżonn li nagħmel evalwazzjoni ta’ dawk l-aħhar sentejn ta’ ħajti u dak li rajt ma tantx għoġobni. Bdejt infittex xi ħaġa biex nimla l-vojt kbir li kelli, u kif kont bilqiegħda tfajt ħarsti lejn Ġesu. Jien u nħares lejn Ġesu’ Ewkaristija go fija ħassejt ċertu serħan u hemm indunajt li mhux jien biss kont

qed inħares lejn Ġesu', imma anke Ġesu' kien qed iħares lejja b' ħarsa ta' mħabba. "Mulej xi trid minni?" Dak il hin imtlejt b' ferħ u b' imħabba akbar, tant li nfajjt f' bikja kbira bla ma stajt nieqaf. Ma kontx aktar aghma, iżda erġajt ġejt nara. Rajt li Ġesu' qatt ma telaqni, li hu ħabbni ħafna u għalhekk hassejt il-bżonn li nħobb jien ukoll. Hu permezz tal-imħabba li ngħaqadt ma' Kristu u Hu għannaqni miegħu. Wara l-adorazzjoni mort fuq il-father u għidtlu li ridt nagħmel jumejn il-kunvent. Tbissimli u qalli "Iva, mela eija il-ħamis wara l-adorazzjoni".

Il-ħamis ta' dik il ġimgħa mort il-kunvent tal-ħamrun, u iktar ma bdejt immur iktar ridt

nibqa' hemm. Dak is-sajf jien tlabt il-Mulej jurini t-triq li Hu kien għazel għalija. Tlabtu biex jizvojtani aktar minni nnfisi u jimlieni biH. U dan għadni nitlobulu sallum. Darba minn-hom, Fra Stephen ikkuntattja lill-persuna oħra li kienet tkun miegħi l-ħamrun biex jagħmel esperjenza fil-kunvent tar-Rabat. Stieden lili ukoll u minn hemm bdiet u kompliet il-mixja tiegħi sallum.

Wara sentejn ta' dixxerniment, Fr Joseph Magro talab lil Provinċjal sabiex inkun nista nibda il-ħajja franġiskana, ngħix flimkien mal-fraternita' u nara' l-ħajja tal-patrijiet minn ġewwa.

Ħbieb u zghazagh li niltaqa magħhom l-iskola

ħafna drabi jistaqsuni "Il-ħajja fil-kunvent kif inhi, kif thossok?" Iċ-ċavetta għal kunvent huwa Kristu li għalih tasal biex tiċhad lilek innifsek, f' Ġesu' tibda tħobb lil aħwa, iċċedi r-rieda u l-aptiti tiegħek u titlaq kolloxx, bħal ma qal Franġisku stess "Il-qawwa ħelwa u meħtieġa ta' mħabbtek Mulej tahkem ir-ruh tiegħi u tbiegħdni minn dak kollu li hu tad-dinja biex immut bl-imħabba ta' mħabbtek, Int li b' imħabbtek ridt tmut għall-imħabba tiegħi".

Għażiż, jiena nixtieq li inti ukoll f' ħajtek mhux biss tagħmel esperjenza tal-imħabba f' Alla imma li tilqgħu bil-ferħ u f' aċċettah.

Monthly Adoration


The Vocation Centre is planning to organise a Eucharistic Adoration once a month, in order to pray God for more vocations in the Franciscan Order.

This Adoration is one with a difference, in the sense that it will be a silent moment of prayer, with background music and some visual aids in order to help those participating in their prayer. Personal counselling available during the Adoration.

This Adoration will be held at Ta' Pinto Chapel, Valletta Waterfront with the collaboration of the Port Chaplain Fr. Paul Attard OFM, every third Wednesday of the month from 8 to 9 pm. The candidates in formation of the Maltese Franciscan Province will join in the Adoration. This is also an invitation for you and your friends, especially young friends, to join us and pray for vocations.

Dates:

**December 20, 2006; January 17, 2007;
February 21, 2007; March 21, 2007;
April 18, 2007; May 16, 2007;
June 20, 2007**



Adorazzjoni

“Iva, għadni jidli li dmet tagħmel quddiem il-father, tant jista' jgħannaqni idni
/ tagħmel u jgħidli għajri li mħabbtek li hu ta' mħabbtek” (Mt. 5, 18)

Kull tielet Erbgħa tas-xahas fil-Kappella ta' Pinto
il-Valletta Waterfront mit-8.00 sad-9.00pm
aktar informazzjoni

www.ofmvok.org

Offiċċju Vokazzjonali Franciskani, Portofranġiskani, Triq San Pawl, Bahar MDTL, MALTA - Tel. 21430066

Happy Christmas in the Offing for 24 Bethlehem Families

CTS News

On November 25th, after his Solemn Entry into Bethlehem for the feast of Saint Catherine, the Custos of the Holy Land, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, inaugurated the two seven-story buildings of Saint Catherine's Residence, each containing 24 apartments for the city's Roman Catholics.

As part of the Custody's renovation and construction program of the project meets several objectives:

1. Provides homes for the city's Christian families.
2. Provides work opportunities.
3. Limits emigration of Christian families.
4. Brings the Custody closer to the people.
5. Increases investment in property ownership in the Holy Land.
6. Preserves and maintains property in the Holy Land for the good of society.

Seventy apartments are currently under construction in Bethlehem

as part of this program. Since more than twice that number of families has applied for tenancy, a commission was formed to choose tenants in accordance with objective criteria. Each family has assembled a file indicating their resources, the number of dependents, etc., and the commission's five members—the Treasurer of the Custody, Father Abdel Masih Fahim ofm; the parish priest, Father Amjad Sabbara ofm; the director of the





Custody's school, Father Marwan Di'Des ofm, and two members of the community—will make the decisions together, on a case-by-case basis. Construction of Saint Catherine's Residence began in July, 2004. At the beginning of November this year the happy families were informed that an apartment had been allotted to them and they could take immediate possession. Each 115 sq. m. apartment includes three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large living room, a kitchen and a balcony. Although free of ostentation, the Residence is clearly of high quality construction. The Custody of the Holy Land undertakes to give the disadvantaged both quality and beauty.

Moreover, project's cost effectiveness earned kudos for the Palestinian architect, Najib Nasser. The Custody's customary rents are \$200 per month (160 euros, 860 New Israeli Shekels); the city's usual rents are from \$400 to \$600. For purposes of comparison: a Palestinian policeman earns \$400 per month (€ 320, NIS 1700) and a professor, around \$7-800 (€ 550-630, NIS 3025-3460).

"Although you can survive on \$250 to \$300 a month in Bethlehem, it's only starting at \$1000 (€

780) that you can live decently," says a Bethlehem family man. Few families earn that much. "Before the second Intifada (going back to the year 2000), when the economic situation allowed both parents to work, life was bearable." The city of Bethlehem in the year 2006 has an employment rate of 60% of the work force.

Furthermore, the absence of a Palestinian State and of adequate social and administrative structures in the Palestinian Authority means that there is no system of medical insurance or old age pensions. Families, therefore, have to try to amass their own savings for life beyond the age of 65, the legal age of retirement.

This helps us to better understand the needs of local residents and the Custody's efforts to help them.

It is of note that the construction was carried out by local contractors who were selected by bid. The architect, Najib Nasser, is a Palestinian Christian who lives in Bethlehem and has worked on numerous projects for the Custody here and in Jerusalem. His architectural firm employs 26 people: architects, engineers,

draftsmen, and secretaries. One hundred other people are foremen, project directors and skilled craftsmen. Two engineers remained permanently on site to supervise the progress of the work.

Project cost for Saint Catherine's Residence comes to some five million dollars. It is financed by the Custody of the Holy Land, with assistance from Europe and America. Several other projects are in progress at Jerusalem (Bethpage), Jericho, Nazareth, Jaffa, three more buildings in Bethlehem, one of which was financed thanks to a gift from Pope John Paul II, and another at Tripoli, Lebanon.

We recall that the Custody of the Holy lives and works in large part thanks to the gifts of the world's Christians at the annual Good Friday collection.

In summary, then, this year the world's Christians are giving the Christians of Bethlehem a new home. A wonderful Christmas present in the city where the Savior and Prince of Peace was born.





FESTI U BIRTHDAYS

DIĊEMBRU

10 Fra Lorrie Zerafa	1 Fra Alfred Sciberras
25 Fra Noel Muscat	3 Fra Noel Muscat
26 Fra Stephen Sciberras	4 Fra Marcellino Micallef
26 Fra Stephen Magro	11 Fra Gwann Micallef
27 Fra Gwann Schranz	17 Fra Charles Tonna
31 Mons. Sylvester Magro	17 Fra Ray Scicluna
	19 Fra Godfrey Micallef
	29 Fra Pietru Pawl Meilak
	31 Fra Sebastian Camilleri

JANNAR

7 Fra Karlu Tonna	7 Fra Kerubin Galea
8 Fra Arturu Azzopardi	8 Fra Adrian J. Cachia
16 Fra Marcello Ghirlando	Fra Mark Ciantar
20 Fra Sebastian Camilleri	9 Fra Charles Grech
27 Fra Julian Sammut	15 Fra Kamillu Aquiluna
	31 Fra Sandro Overend

Awguri u Xewqat Sbieħ!

F' DIN IL-HARĠA

Dicembru 2006

Kardinal Frangiskan imexxi l-Kongregazzjoni għall-Kleru	3
Dokument finali tal-Kapitlu Ġenerali Straordinarju	4
Kungress tal-Kummissarji ta' l-Art Imqaddsa	5
550 mill-mewt ta' San Gwann minn Capistrano	8
VIII Ċentinarju mit-twelid ta' Santa Elizabetta	12
Komunikazzjoni mid-Definitorju Ġenerali	14
Programm tal-Kapitlu tal-Ħsajjar	16
L-esperjenza tal-Ministru Provinċjal għall-Kapitlu	17
Mill-ġurnali	21
Xi jfisser il-Milied Frangiskan	22
Il-migja tal-patrijiet frangiskani f'tas-Sliema	24
Informazzjoni	28
Esperjenza fl-INSERM	34
Hawn jien Mulej	36
Proġett għall-familji f'Betlehem	38
Fraternitas	40

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