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Our mission (im) possible?

Jesus, before ascending into heaven, had commanded his disciples: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” From the command of Christ Jesus, the evangelization of the Nations has become the first commitment of the Church. Except for the Apostle John, all the other Apostles poured out their blood for the cause of the mission.

Guided by the example of the apostles, our Seraphic Father Francis wanted the mission to the Nations to be a special vocation for his brothers; in fact, he wrote it in his Rule: “Let those brothers who wish by divine inspiration to go among the Saracens or other non-believers...” (FA:ED I, 106)

Supported by the Spirit of St. Francis, from the XIII century to today thousands upon thousands have been Franciscan missionaries and have brought the Gospel with courage and sacrifice to all the continents, among them also China...

The first Franciscan mission was installed in China between the XIII century and the XIV century, during the Yuan dynasty.

Among the missionaries we have the most famous blessed John of Montecorvino, Franciscan friar, founder of the Catholic mission in China, who was archbishop of Beijing and Primate of all China. Towards the middle of the XVIII century, the Capuchin Friars

of the Marches reached China in the Tibetan area and a little later the Spanish friars also arrived. It is not possible to imagine how much sacrifice was made by our brothers in that great country; we know only something by way of their writings.

Also today the Capuchin Friars as many other religious want to help the Chinese people to know better the Lord Jesus Christ. We know nonetheless that many are the difficulties because of the lack of a full religious freedom.



Given the current economic development the greater interest is turned toward the economic area, but it is also true that many people, today, look with interest toward the cultural and religious area.

For the missionaries this is a good opportunity to make known to the Chinese the truth of the Gospel, because the people have already intuited by now that

material abundance does not carry one to true satisfaction in life; thus they have begun to seek beyond the values of material things, turning to religion. Therefore every year, all over China, in the Protestant churches there are millions and millions of baptisms, and from this point of view we can say that now, in this great country, springtime has arrived for Christianity.

Jesus said: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out la-

borers into his harvest.” (Lk 10:2)

Certainly, China today has need of missionaries, but of prepared missionaries, like the great Jesuit Matteo Ricci; a missionaries that know how to announce the Gospel and to communicate with the people.

Therefore, if some friar wishes to be a missionary in the land of the dragon, it is necessary to know that many are the difficulties: the political situation, the different culture and difficult language...and therefore, beyond courage, the “charism” of language-learning of knowing how to relate with the people is necessary.

After facing many troubles, the day of great recompense will come, so long awaited, namely that Christianity will be spread in that country, as had predicted St. John Bosco: “Beijing, in the twenty-first century, will become the center of Christianity in all of Asia.”

A Capuchin missionary



From the last meeting of the General Council

ROME, Italy – The General Council of the Order met for its tenth ordinary meeting from March 31 to April 11. Among the most important topics and decisions we point out:

The appointment of Provincial Minister and Councilors for the new Province called **'The Province of Capuchin Friars of Piedmont'** which will have as a patron St. Ignatius of Santhià.

The approval ad experimentum of the **Statutes of International Economic Solidarity** and the presentation of a program for the **Ratio formationis** proposed by the General Secretariat of Formation.

The **Commission for International Economic Solidarity** was renewed, and will be composed of the following brothers: John Pfanenstiel (PR Pennsylvania), Mauro Miselli (PR Lombardy), Linus Fah (PR Switzerland), Domingo Año Cebolla (PR Spain), Hailemikael Beraki (PR Eritrea), Paul Alvares (PR Goa); The **Project Managers** were also appointed: Constantino Alonso Saldívar (CU Mexico-Texas), Carlos Tavares (PR Minas Gerais), Celestino Arias (PR New York-New England), Joseph Coz (PR France), Edwin Colaco (PR Karnataka), James Boner (PR Great Britain).

The **JPIC Commission** presented its project for this sexennium and a survey to collect information on the projects/social works of the Order. Br. John Celichowski (PR Calvary, Detroit) was appointed president of the Commission.

The **Preparatory Commission for PCO VIII** presented the questionnaire to be sent to all the friars of the Order.

Even before the meeting there was organized a meeting with the presidents of the four Conferences of Europe to prepare for the **Chapter of Mats – Europe** to be celebrated at Fatima from December 1-5, 2014.

When Br. Paolo Braghini asked some kids what they wanted to say to the Indians of the Javari Valley in the Amazon rainforest, a girl of twelve responded right away: *"We're interested in your future!"* And these weren't just words. That girl was one of three thousand students of the middle and high schools of the Diocese of Assisi – Nocera Umbra – Gualdo Tadino to whom was presented the "Young People for Javari" Project in these past months. Participation in the project was surprising! The young people were given craft workshops to do and then the sale of their products. What was received was

The Javari Valley is an indigenous land located in the extreme west of the State of Amazonas, extending to the border with Peru. With its eight million hectares, it is the second largest indigenous reserve in Brazil. For the great abundance of cedar and mahogany, two of the most precious woods of the Amazon rainforest, the region is much surrounded by lumber businesses. The Javari Valley is inhabited by more than ten indigenous tribes. The current struggle of his population is the endemic presence of various forms of hepatitis, brought by invaders, and by malaria, which represents a true and

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Mission: "We're interested in your future!"

given to the Bishop of Assisi – Nocera Umbra – Gualdo Tadino, Most Rev. Domenico Sorrentino, who left for the Amazon rainforest last February 10 with a delegation from the Diocese together with the Provincial of the Seraphic Province of Umbria, Br. Celestino Di Nardo and Br. Tarcisio Calviti. The "Javari Project," promoted by the Missionary Center of the Capuchin Friars of Umbria in collaboration with "Ra.Mi," "Missionary Young People" [Ragazzi Missionari], has been supported also by the Diocese since 2010.

real threat to exterminate this people. The Project seeks first of all to sensitize civil society and to intervene with the Brazilian government for government policies to effectively combat this grave situation.

What I want to communicate, however, is that the "Young People for Javari" revealed to us the enormous missionary potential inherent in the young, their spontaneous generosity and their readiness to make themselves available to do something concrete for the most needy and for those who live on the periphery of the world. All this at a time when young people are often attacked and criticized for their indifference and lack of sensitivity to the real problems of the world.

"We're interested in your future," must also be our message to the new generations, hopefully less contaminated by a tiredness that no longer nourishes passion for the future. Their optimism has been contagious for us, which has made them see bridges where we only saw walls.

For a Church "going forth" in mission, as Pope Francis has asked (Evangelii Gaudium 20), the first necessary thing is to go out on the bridges that already exist, but are not yet enough traveled... those that unite peoples, nations, cultures and generations, and our Provinces...



First Meeting of the Vice Postulators of the Order

FRASCATI - A two-day meeting of the Vice Postulators, organized by the Office of the General Postulator of the Order, was held on April 23 and 24. 35 Vice Postulators were present, from Italy, Brazil, the United States, Switzerland, and Catalonia. It was the first time that those charged with following the Causes of Saints came together to know each other, to share, to listen, and to receive instructions on how to bet-

ter carry out the service entrusted to them and to make concrete the words of our General Minister: "the Saints are the treasure of the Order" (Circular Letter for the 300th anniversary of the canonization of St. Felix of Cantalice). On the afternoon of the first day, the participants heard the talk of Bishop Marcello Bartolucci, Secretary of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, who described the figure of the Vice Postulator in relation to the General Postulator of the Order and the juridical role assigned to them according to the Code of Canon Law and the Documents of the pontifical magisterium.



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that followed, there was highlighted the beginning of the path of transparency desired by Pope Francis as well as the economic acts relative to the Causes having a direct relation, by way of the General Postulator and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, with the Holy Father. The conviviality, the appreciated relationships and not least the characteristics of the place contributed to make the First Meeting of the Vice Postulators of the Order fraternal and fruitful. Leaving Frascati, many Vice Postulators asked that this initiative not be dropped but be put forth again in the future.

The virtual Capuchin missionary

PALERMO, Italy – Born in 1929 and after doing a little of everything one might expect of a Capuchin, Father Bonaventura Salvatore Cinà, of the Province of Palermo, from his "retirement" has put himself to serious work in the vast field of the virtual world,



especially in the social networks. Just by way of Facebook he is contact with more than 2,000 people from every corner of the world, age and culture. The hours of daily work can't be easily calculated. He is always involved in contact with his "web parishioners", praying for them, or even learning how to better form them. At the beginning, a little misunderstood and criticized by the brothers, Br. Bonaventura justified himself by showing the concrete results of his apostolate that, for his age, could not be the same as before. This means, however, gives him the possibility of coming to a great many people who need to approach the Gospel, ask questions, and to create a healthy and joyous awareness, but above all need to be heard. Then, having heard from Benedict XVI that these means are a true and proper new fields of evangelization, Br. Bonaventura grasped the very important and updated virtual mission with results, being a very real and concrete help even to many religious and priests who come to find him in his 'parlor' on the computer.

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Seeking the missionary North

ACRE, Brazil – On March 19, the solemnity of St. Joseph, the Province of Rio de Janeiro e Espírito Santo (Brazil), officially assumed the Capuchin missionary presence in Northern Brazil (the State of Acre). Until now, this presence was lived in collaboration with the Province of São Paulo, which has decided to leave the mission. Even with few brothers and

many other difficulties, the Province of Rio in its last Provincial Chapter decided to carry forward this missionary project as a true dream of fraternity in this far-away and needy region, with all the challenges of a mission land, but also a land fertile for planting the Word of God, the witness of the charism, and Capuchin fraternity.





Sister Lilian Mutiso
Capuchin Poor Clare

We Capuchin Poor Clares of the contemplative life have as our mission the contemplation of divine truth and constant union with God. Prayer is the first and particular duty of all of us and also for all religious. Contemplatives are men and women prophetic figures, sentinels, witnesses of hope of that which is to come in the morning. Contem-

platives are persons that have God as the center of their lives. They become one spirit with Him, "for whoever clings to God, becomes one spirit with Him, and that God will be all in all." (2 Cel 219, cf. 1 Cor 6:17, 12:6) To be contemplatives is to live as mother of all people; the contemplative person carries in her heart and in her prayer, the joy and the hope, the difficulties and the sufferings of humanity. Blessed Maria Angela Astorch felt herself as "sister and mother of all the faithful." From the moment when she entered within the walls of the convent, she burned with desire to give herself for the good of all believers. The contemplative is one who sees, with spiritual eyes, is he who sees what the others don't see because they see with the eyes of the flesh. To be contemplatives is to have the eyes of God. To become an authentic contemplative it is necessary to let oneself be guided by the Spirit because only God can transform carnal looking into a spiritual view. The true contemplatives have no fear of using human means to reach the Creator, because they find God in everything. From this point it can be

understood that the task of the contemplative in evangelization is of a spiritual nature, and is not a question of having things to do. Contemplatives are not parasites on the church and society. Both have need of contemplatives to find the right path.

Contemplatives have a prophetic mission for the Church and for the world. The true contemplative has a heart as big as the world and no one is removed from the cell of her heart. This capacity to carry all in one's heart comes from her intimacy with God, of being surrounded and embraced by God. A contemplative separates herself from all in order to unite herself to all, not to be an isolated person. Even though in cloister, she accompanies the other in various ways. Contemplative prayer leads to the raw reality of wounded humanity. We speak of a soul that feels itself in communion with all, with all and with the Lord, with their joys and their pains, their hopes and their frustrations. It brings all into its contemplative soul. Kofi Annan says as much on the power of prayer: "I have not accomplished anything alone. Millions of people in the whole world long for peace. Therefore I say that I must not undervalue the power of prayer." Contemplation is a process that saves humanity and the contemplative person is the guide toward this direction.

Prayer is the primary mission of the contemplative life. A prayer that reaches all the corners of the world. It is a tool that has no boundaries. Without lessening the importance of prayer, we can add that there are other means for evangelization in the contemplative life. Looking at the needs of today, the human person desires peace, tranquility, silence, durable joy. Responding to these needs with the grace of the contemplation of

Our contemplative mission today

God, contemplative persons can help other people to meet God who is the source of all that can satisfy the human heart. It is our task to behave thus, communicating the beauty that we have found in God, because the contemplative life in itself is a life full of beauty, happiness, and meaning. Given this we can offer a welcome and a personal relationship to people who suffer, who have need of comfort and of spiritual inspiration. The welcome must be free, cordial, friendly, tranquil, and without any inferiority or superiority complex with respect to the religious or spiritual situation of the person. The supreme model of welcome is Jesus. He welcomed and listened to all. Jesus used welcome and personal relationship as a means of evangelization, as for example, the colloquies with Nicodemus, with Zacchaeus, with Simon the Pharisee and the Samaritan Woman. After Jesus, the apostles used this method to proclaim the Good News. We can help people looking for a personal encounter with God in a simple but authentic and contemplative way. We can help people who want to learn to pray, inviting them to participate in liturgical celebrations, in prayer groups, creating and offering spaces for prayer. We can also help young people who want to discern their vocation. This welcome needs checks, so that it does not constitute an obstacle to the life of prayer and to the fraternal life of the contemplative person, of which she has need to nourish herself, to be fed daily with the Word of God, the Eucharist, and with adoration. Lacking a profound interior life it is not possible to witness and to manifest to others the love of God, his power and his mercy.

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Popes and saints

VATICAN CITY – April 27, 2014 will rest as an historical and unforgettable day in the heart of the Catholic world, when Pope Francis, in the presence of an immense crowd, canonized two Popes: John XXIII and John Paul II. More than 150 Cardinals and 700 bishops, as well as Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, concelebrated. Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, accompanied by the Postulators Giovangiuseppe Califano, OFM, and Slawomir Oder, addressed the three petitions to the Pope and then our Holy Father Francis pro-

nounced the Formula of Canonization with which he declared and proclaimed Saints John XXIII and John Paul II. In his homily, Pope Francis thus described the new saints: "*St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II were not afraid to look upon the wounds of Jesus, to touch his torn hands and his pierced side. They were not ashamed of the flesh of Christ, they were not scandalized by him, by his cross; they did not despise the flesh of their brother (cf. Is 58:7), because they saw Jesus in every person who suffers and struggles. These were two men of courage, filled with the parrhesia of the Holy Spirit, and they bore witness before the Church and the world to God's goodness and mercy.*"

