

PCO VIII: The Instrumentum Laboris



In the Programmatic Letter for the 2012-2018 sexennium, the General Minister, with his Council, announced the plan to convoke a PCO (the eighth) on the theme of “the grace of working.” In the letter that followed to call PCO VIII (November 1, 2013) there was established a working group that would commit itself to the preparation of the same PCO.

The group met in Rome for some days, three times, to develop above all a questionnaire to send to all the friars of the Order and then to synthesize the responses that came, so as to then compose an Instrumentum laboris for the participants in the PCO.

The text that we are presenting, more than a document, is precisely a synthesis of the responses received. Its purpose is to give a voice to the friars, beginning with their feelings and their

and minority, in as much as work that makes for or expresses power or work that is simply for making money cannot be work for a Franciscan who is called to be minor and subject to all. Nor can it be an honest work as St. Francis intended.

If work is a grace, we can be grateful to the Lord for the tasks that he entrusts to us and, also by means of this tool, let us put ourselves to work.

From the synthesis of the responses to the questionnaire, certain meaningful guidelines can be drawn that open paths for reflection and discussion. Many questions are deliberately left open because of the pluriformity of our Order, spread out in all the continents, such that it is not possible to define, in a homogeneous way, models of work that could be the expression of a true Capuchin brother.

experience. These promptings, in fact, are many and varied and often have need of deeper study or of being contextualized, but we believe that they are near and incarnate in the realities in which we live.

In the text one can read, in fact, a certain continuity with the other PCOs, especially the last two on poverty

It is certain, however, that work cannot become an end in itself, but an opportunity to play out what one is, convinced that he belongs to a fraternity that finds itself in diversity, building the kingdom of God and collaborating in creation, with the work of its own hands, with intelligence, and with the specific talents of the individual members.

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We are aware that the Lord offers us many opportunities to give ourselves to his service as workers in his vineyard and each one can give his contribution, so that, as St. Francis says, the spirit of holy prayer and devotion is not extinguished.

The sense of the Order seems oriented toward taking up every possible work, from the most humble to the most prestigious, from that carried out within the domestic walls of a friary to that which is manifested in the diverse areas of pastoral care, including the merely manual sectors.

The objective of work remains, however, the construction of the fraternity, safeguarding the individual abilities of each and opening itself to the whole world. Perhaps it is this that remains the most problematic challenge and that which needs the most attention and reflection and which the PCO will have to discuss the most.

(To see the full Instrumentum laboris, go to www.ofmcap.org)



Toward a Capuchin Ratio Formationis

Interview with Br. Jaime Rey 



Why a Ratio Formationis?

A great many have asked us why we are making a Ratio. And this a very interesting thing, because there is a group of friars who say: we need a Ratio, because we feel very lost, we don't know exactly how to form the friars. However, at the same time, there is another group of friars that says: Ugh, a Ratio; they want to make us uniform. We are a very large Order. We don't need a document imposed from above as if we were soldiers.

The deepest purpose of making a Ratio has no other meaning than that of making an effort in our current culture in order to guarantee our charismatic identity. For example, Br. Charles Alphonse has invited me to give an example. Someone can't be a Capuchin if he doesn't have the desire to live in fraternity. This doesn't mean that we have to live fraternity in the same way in Spain as in Poland, or in India, or in any other place, but the value of the fraternal life is a charismatic value that we must defend and that has to be present. And what is said of the value of fraternity can be said of the value of contact or of meeting the poor, of the necessity of prayer and of the other values that we will present.

We are speaking of general norms. Of what kind?

What type of Ratio? This can be explained in a positive or negative manner. Normally a Ratio among those that have been written have been rather in the juridical-normative area. The Congregations have a big book on the shelf, in which there are all the precise norms that a formator can consult. This will not be our Ratio. We have rather decided to make a Ratio in the charismatic-inspiration area; this

means that it will be a very, very short Ratio, but a Ratio with a lot of charismatic strength and with the principles that can give inspiration today for our life.

What methodology will be used?

From the methodological point of view, it could be a Ratio with which the General Minister and his Council have charged the Secretariat. We are writing a document to be sent to the whole Order. This could be a document made from above. And already one knows the result will never arrive at the base. On the contrary, our effort will be that of writing a Ratio right from the base. Consulting the friars, listening to the friars, what are their problems. It is what we call the methodology from below. And this will be our methodology.

How much time do you need?

In what way will we start our work? The first thing to say is that we are almost waiting to let PCO VIII, on work, to pass, such that the Order doesn't get too lost in two works of much importance and depth, and once the Plenary Council is passed, we will begin the work of the Ratio. The General Minister has already begun this work with the letter on identity and the sense of belonging, and at the same time we have already practically prepared a questionnaire to be sent to all the friars in order to consult them on how they want this Ratio to be done. These are the fundamental questions that will serve to put discussion and dialogue in motion for the fraternities, not just the formative fraternities, but all the fraternities, and at the same time that we at the Conference level and then at the level of the Secretariat we can gather the voices, and at the same time guarantee that the Ratio is

done from below.

Finally, to what can we look forward?

What do we foresee? This Ratio, as I have said, will be very simple. In the schema that we have thought of, it will have three chapters and three small appendices. I will explain briefly the three chapters. The first, very interesting, on which we have already worked together with the International Formation Council, means to present the figure of Francis; Francis our brother, who is our teacher and principal formator, who presents himself to us in order to say how he wants us to follow today in the footsteps of Jesus. That is, Francis the formator. It is not a simple thing to say what sort of Francis we want, because we know from the beginning, with the famous 'Franciscan question,' there are many perspectives and many emphases regarding Francis. We have discovered that the Capuchin reform—in this sense a reflection of the General Minister in his letter—the Capuchin reform makes an option for the Francis of the Testament, a very fresh and very charismatic Francis. Because of this the first Capuchins were called the friars of the Testament. So also our Francis in some way will this Francis of the Testament.



Meeting of the International JPIC Commission



ROME, Italy – The International Commission of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) met from May 4-7 at the General Curia. Present were the six members of the commission: Br. John Celichowski (President, PR Calvary, USA), Br. James Donegan (PR New York-New England/Guatemala), Br. Darwin Orozco (CU Ecuador), Br. Henryk Cisowski (Pr Krakow), Br. John Sulle (PR Tanzania) and Br. Jacob Kani (PR Krist

Jyoti, India) together with Br. Benedict Ayodi, Director of the Capuchin JPIC Office. The main objective of the meeting, among other things, was to review the JPIC activities from last year and to plan for the rest of the year. It was observed that the JPIC Commission and Office has done an enormous work to set up the database that will help the survey of the social projects of the entire Order.

Br. Mauro Jhri speaks to the OFM General Chapter

ASSISI, Italy – On this past May 11, our General Minister, Br. Mauro Jhri, was invited to speak to the General Chapter of the OFM, which is still being held. The General



Minister proposed as a topic the theme: **“FRIARS AND MINORS”** which is a part of the central theme of the Chapter itself, namely, **“Friars and Minors in our times.”** Here are a two points from the General Minister’s talk: **“Placing the commitment to fraternal life at the center of the charism, we recovered, or better yet, we discovered the beauty of St. Francis’ fraternal choice, he who from the beginning of his conversion called himself ‘Brother Francis.’ He was aware and grateful to God for God’s decisive intervention (Deus ipse!) which led him among the lepers. With God’s intervention, Francis’ worldview and his perception of life was irreversibly changed. He chose to live among the lepers, to show them mercy and compassion, and to be brother to them. []**



Annual ASMEN meeting



ROME, ROME, Italy – The Annual meeting of ASMEN (Conference of the Middle East, Gulf, and Pakistan) was held from May 12-14 at the General Curia. The main topic and theme of the meeting was: **“our life as lesser brothers in situations of minority (Minors/minority).”** The various circumscriptions had developed the theme, beginning with a preparatory document and a questionnaire prepared beforehand. To

the question, **“Despite the difficulties, do we need to continue with our presence in some places?”**, the brothers responded in the affirmative. In totalitarian contexts like that of inflexible Islam or even of hostile Orthodoxy, the presence of the brothers is a sign of diversity, openness, and dialogue. One day of the meeting was dedicated to a pilgrimage to Assisi for a moment of prayer and fraternal renewal.

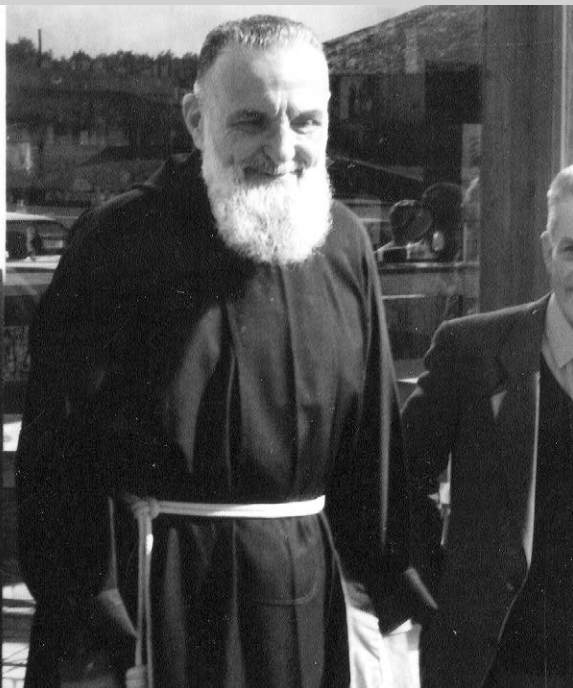
[] The danger for us is that we can call ourselves **“minors”** while in reality be very distant from the poor and marginalized. We might be more like the priest or the Levite who came down from Jerusalem to Jericho, saw the man left half dead on the road and just passed on. That’s not what the young son of Pietro di Bernardone did. By God’s grace, he overcame his disgust for the sight and smell of lepers. He heeded their cry for help and forgot himself. I wonder if we too, myself included, need the Lord to intervene and lead us to go among the lepers with compassionate hearts? Calling ourselves **“Franciscan”** is

not enough. St. Francis challenges us by saying: "They must rejoice when they live among people of little value, those that are looked down upon,



when they are among the poor and weak, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside."

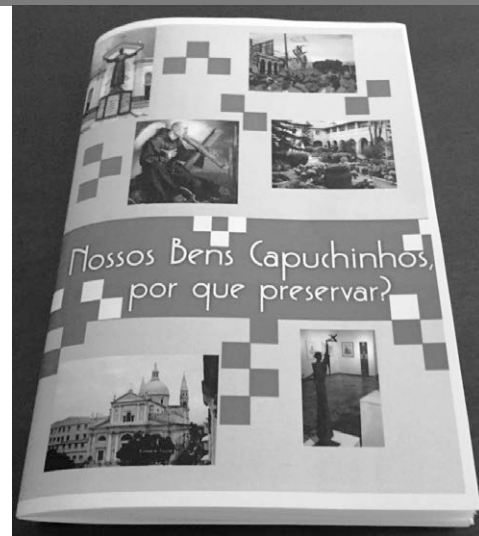
(Complete text and video of the talk at www.capitulumgenerale2015.ofm.org)



CCB presents Manual for Cultural Goods and a new Website

SÃO PAULO, SÃO PAULO, Brazil – On this past May 17, during the annual assembly of the Capuchin Conference of Brazil (CCB), there was presented to the friars the booklet, *Our Capuchin Goods. Why conserve?* – a manual for preservation of the cultural goods of the Order in Brazil. A fruit of the work of a group the Conference created last year, the text aims to make the Brazilian friars aware of the importance of cultural and patrimonial goods and to develop the sense of belonging to this rich cultural heritage. Beyond the book, the Commission presented a plan with precise objectives:

- to produce regular supports for the preservation and accessibility of Brazilian Capuchin archives, libraries, and museums;
- To form the friars for the work of preservation, protection, and defense of cultural goods;
- to help with the organization of archives, libraries, museums, and cultural centers in the various circumscriptions.



The new CCB website was also presented on this occasion, with various new possibilities for interaction on the various technological platforms, connecting as much as possible, the Order spread out over 12 Brazilian Circumscriptions.

The address of the new website is: www.capuchinhos.org.br

Gianfranco Maria Chiti: Brigadier General, Capuchin, and Servant of God

ORVIETO, Italy – May 8, 2015. In the splendid context of the cathedral of Orvieto, Bishop Benedetto Tuzzi opened the inquiry into the life, virtues, and reputation for holiness of the Servant of God Gianfranco Maria Chiti, Capuchin priest. In the central nave of the cathedral there were present Bishop Santo Marciànò of the Military Ordinariate of Italy, the Capuchin brothers of the Province of Rome, many military personnel, the Grenadiers of Sardinia, civil authorities, and many who had known Br. Gianfranco in his military service and pastoral ministry. The Servant of God, born in Gignese (Province

of Verbanò-Cusio-Ossola) on May 6, 1921, spent his childhood and youth in Pesaro. At the age of 15 he began his military career, signing up at the Military Academy of Modena. At 18 he left as a lieutenant and began his service immediately, with Italy at war on various fronts. On September 8, 1943 he joined the Italian Social Republic, seeking in any way to save those who were fugitive. Many priests in the area of Mondovì, where he was in command, attest to his works. In fact, in 1948, he was reintegrated into the new army of the Italian Republic and in 1950 he was in Somalia for the UN. On May 6, 1978 he

was promoted to Brigadier General and then retired. The following May 30, giving hope to what had been maturing for a long time, he was received as a novice Capuchin at Rieti. On September 12, 1982 he was ordained priest in the cathedral of the same city. Called to obedience in Orvieto for the restoration of a friary, he made it again a place of prayer and recollection. He died in Rome on November 20, 2004, following a car accident. He rests in the cemetery of Pesaro. The diocesan inquiry into the proofs and the witness to the life, virtue, and reputation for holiness of the Servant of God begins now.