

Prot. N. 00046/16

 Curia Generalis  
Fratrum Minorum  
Capuccinorum

# THE GRACE OF WORKING

## VIII PLENARY COUNCIL OF THE ORDER PROPOSALS

Letter of the General Minister and the brother General Councilors at the conclusion of the VIII Plenary Council of the Order  
Text of the approved Propositions

TO ALL THE FRIARS OF THE ORDER  
OF FRIARS MINOR CAPUCHIN

About two months have passed since the conclusion of the work of the eighth Plenary Council of the Order, dedicated to the theme the grace of working, and I am sure that many of you would like to know the result of the meeting, how we have worked, and the reflection that this gathering has produced. After the conclusion of the work, the Propositions were revised from the grammatical and literary points of view. This revision brought a further moment to examine the Propositions, which justifies the brief delay with which we are handing on to you the fruit of our work.

The PCO saw the participation of 44 friars: 10 members of the General Council and 34 delegates from the Conferences. To these were added the friars who carried out the tasks of translation, moderating, working as secretaries, liturgical animation and other services that made our work efficient and productive. We worked together from October 26 to November 19, 2015. Our stay at the 'San Lorenzo' International College in Rome was supported by the cordial fraternity of the friars of the permanent community there and by our students, with whom we shared prayers in the evening and meals.

As you can imagine the composition of the assembled brothers was heterogeneous and multicultural; the different areas of the Capuchin world were represented with their baggage of history and culture. The participants were

subdivided into four working groups: two for the English language, one for Italian, and one that joined the brothers of the Spanish and Portuguese languages. All the friars showed a fine spirit of flexibility both in praying together using different languages, and in the little rules made such that the event could be celebrated in an orderly way. The climate that was created among the participants was serene and fraternal, especially in the moments of evening recreation.

The first ten days of work were dedicated to a studious listening on the theme of work and to particularly meaningful witnesses. During the sessions of the morning we heard Professor Mauro Magatti, who presented a sociological approach on certain dynamics that govern the world of work. Professor Mary Hess introduced us to the world of digital technology and the changes that it has produced in the activities of work; a reality from which we Capuchin friars are not excused! Our confreres Br. Fernando Ventura and Br. Carlos Susin presented on theme of work, respectively, in the Sacred Scriptures and the Magisterium of the Church; they were followed by Br. Pio Murat, General Councilor, who gave us a presentation on how the documents of our Order have dealt with the theme of work. Rev. Felice Accrocca, analyzing the Franciscan Sources, presented the concept of work in St. Francis of Assisi; Br. Giuseppe Buffon, OFM, finally, discussed with us what emerges in

the tradition of the Capuchin Friars Minor with respect to work. During the afternoon sessions, we listened to a series of witness presentations of our fellow religious, both of our Order and from other congregations, who told us in captivating ways about their experience with the poor, the imprisoned, in factories as worker-priests, and in multi-ethnic pastoral situations. This first part of the PCO concluded with a day of retreat and prayer led by Br. Eric Bidot, Provincial Minister of France.

The following days were characterized by reflection, by dialogue, and by proposals. We treated many possibilities of work. We chose not to give rigid criteria to the work of the language groups: it was asked that each brother, beginning from his experience, from the Instrumentum laboris compiled in preparation for the PCO, and by the contributions heard in the preceding days, be free to formulate propositions within his own group. By the end of the first days there emerged a line of work that brought together the hopes of the friars belonging the groups, which can be summarized in three questions:

1. How can we help the friars to reflect on work in the various aspects inherent in it, keeping in mind the rapid changes that different societies are undergoing?
2. What proposals can we present to the friars so that, founded on the Gospel and on the charism of St. Francis, work can be lived truly as a grace?
3. Our identity as brothers and minors: How do we “counter the challenges of individualism and the tendency to reduce work to a tool of mere economic profit”? (Constitutions 78,7)

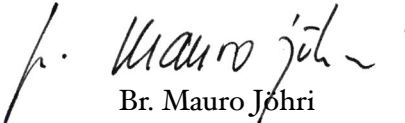
After a first moment of ‘apparent calm’ in which the friars understood better what was their task, we set off with zeal. It was edifying to see how the various language groups emphasized the themes inherent in work, highlighting cultural and social aspects from the various geographic areas. Each group approved propositions on its own to then be brought to the plenary assembly, which in turn approved or rejected the proposals. The effort was significant such that the final proposals should gather up the motions from the different groups. The work of the two editing commissions was important and worthy of gratitude. They worked hard to give value, synthesize, and propose anew, in a linguistically correct way, all that the groups produced.

Our work produced 74 Propositions that we now present to your attention. Allow us to present to you certain criteria with which you can read and dialogue on what the friar delegates to the PCO give to all of you.

1. We have tried to enhance and make current the themes already proposed in our renewed Constitutions, in PCO VI, Living poverty in brotherhood, and in PCO VII, Our fraternal life in minority.
2. In the final editing of the text that you have in your hands we have grouped the various Propositions into thematic areas that follow the development of the chapters of our Constitutions, in particular the first six and IX and XII.
3. We did not try to be systematic or elegant with language. During the work there were many calls to be concrete. Some Propositions are similar, but we have kept them because in the context in which they are placed, they recall concepts and values that are essential for our life.

Now, dear brothers, do your part! We ask all the Provincial Ministers and the Conferences to identify the most opportune means such that what the Delegates to PCO VIII pass on to you is worked upon. Let each circumscription plan special meetings on the Propositions developed during the recent PCO. We entrust to the care of the Ministers the printing and distribution of the Propositions of the PCO to every friar of his own circumscription. Take on this work in a concrete way: following the awareness of the content of the Propositions, let every province, custody, local fraternity and individual Capuchin friar minor make a self-examination with regard to what is written and may this reflection produce a renewal and, if necessary, a change in our style of life. Let us support one another; let us pray the Spirit of the Lord that our work also might manifest in an ever clearer way our identity as brothers and as minors, in our fraternities and where are called to give our lives. We hope that all the friars are able to praise even more the Lord who grants us the ‘Grace of Working.’

All the best for your work, brothers. We greet you fraternally.

  
Br. Mauro Johri  
General Minister OFM Cap

The brothers of the General Council

Rome, January 15, 2016  
Memorial of St. Mauro, Abbot



# VIII PLENARY COUNCIL OF THE ORDER PROPOSALS

## 1. Called to participate in the work of creation

1. We who have freely received the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the great love that God has toward us, feel ourselves called to pass it on to our brothers and sisters, in all of its dimensions, among which is that of work. The grace of work thus becomes praise of God and a witness to Him who has loved us first. We encourage and exhort all the brothers to live the “gospel of work,” even with its inevitable struggles, happy for this vocation and announcing to the world the greatness of the Creator.

2. In the image of Jesus Christ, who worked with his own hands, and of Francis, who followed in his footprints, we make the Kingdom of God present with our work, serving people with our personal and shared gifts. In fact, “Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship. It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task [...]. In this way he sanctified human labor and endowed it with a special significance for our development.” (Laudato si’, 98)

The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, her husband, are for the lesser brother examples of daily, silent, humble, and fraternal work in service to the Kingdom of God. Following the words of St. Francis, who exhorts us to be mothers of one another, let us enter into the mystery of salvation in a way known only to God, and the Father, who

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Laborem exercens*. Given at Castel Gandolfo, on September 14, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, in 1981, the third year of his pontificate.

sees what is secret, will reward us.

The Capuchin tradition has also made work an ordinary part of daily life. Our history is continually enriched by the lives and example of friars who serve the community with all their physical, mental, and spiritual abilities.

3. God bestows the gift of work on humankind. Coming from His hands, work is grace and is to be considered something good, by which we participate actively in the creative action of God. Understood as an opportunity full of grace in which we become sharers in the sanctification and redemption of humankind, the gift of work done with love makes interior joy and enthusiasm shine forth from within us.

4. The human person, in order to grow and realize himself, has a vital need of entering into relationship.

Authentic work helps human relationships mature in their various dimensions:

- Work puts us in contact with ourselves, with our skills and abilities. This is why it is important that every brother, as much as is possible, be recognized in his gifts and charisms.
- Works puts us in relationship with the brothers. Therefore, let personal work, assigned by the fraternity or taken on in communion with it, be an expression of the fraternal life and let it become a privileged instrument for the reinforcement of fraternal relationships, generating a true communion within the common life.

- Work puts us in relationship with people. By consecration we are called not only to serve, but also to offer our lives to others, sharing a particular solidarity with the poor and those who work. Therefore the consecrated person appropriates to himself neither a work nor its fruits, but shares everything.
- Work puts us in relationship with the whole creation. Therefore the consecrated person, by means of his work, shall collaborate in the protection of creation with respect, recognizing in it the footprints of the Creator God.
- Work puts us in relationship with the Lord. The consecrated person is called to work in the 'Vineyard of the Lord'; therefore it is of vital importance that he grow day by day in an intimate relationship with Him who is 'Master of the Vineyard.'

5. Every workbench, desk, ironing board, or kitchen counter can become an 'altar' where the work of our hands and the intentions of our hearts are presented to the Lord of the harvest. Our work becomes liturgical and therefore prayer. One doesn't work so much by himself, or for himself, but in communion with others.

With his own personal way of being and acting, one takes part in the history of salvation and collaborates in the construction of the Kingdom of God.

6. We Capuchin friars are called to provide whatever is necessary for our support through our work and to share this with the poor. The grace of working is constitutive of our being Capuchin friars: it realizes our relationship with God and neighbor, becomes a prophetic announcement of the presence of God in the world and is a source of human and spiritual fulfillment. It is to be understood and lived according to our Capuchin-Franciscan identity: in fraternity, minority, and in the spirit of service. The authenticity of work supposes an ongoing conversion to the Gospel that we have promised to live and to witness to prophetically among people.

## 2. Learning to work

7. An appreciation for work as a response to the love of God in the service of the brothers is to be instilled in the course of initial formation through a pedagogical process. This contributes to the maturation of the person.

8. During the time of initial formation, there should be an insistence on manual and domestic work as a means for interiorizing our charism. When possible, some periods even of external work should be provided for the candidates so they may contribute actively to the support of the fraternity.

9. All the friars are responsible for giving witness to the brothers in initial formation regarding the way of working. It is important, therefore, that the formators especially participate in domestic and manual work, each according to his own ability, and so communicate the value of such work as a dimension that characterizes our style of life.

10. Manual and domestic work makes us experience an altruistic love for the brothers, in the humility and minority of service. If practiced with devotion, beginning from initial formation, it allows us to develop a sense of belonging to the local fraternity and to the circumscription; it becomes a concrete expression of our care for what belongs to everyone and of solidarity with the poorest. In various cultures the practice of manual and domestic work can mean a change of mentality and is an announcement of the equal dignity of the sons and daughters of God.

11. During initial formation, the variety of work available in the circumscription is to be made known to the friars in formation, so that they can discern with their formators what type of work seems most appropriate for them. In this discernment, the abilities of the individual are to be taken into consideration, as well as the needs of the circumscription, of the Church, and of society. The formators shall carefully foster in the friars in formation a concrete willingness to commit themselves to activity and work, according to the demands of the circumstances.

12. After assessing the abilities and the aptitudes of the friars in formation, let them be sent for specialization also in fields not linked to ordained ministry (agriculture, medicine, economics, information technology, social sciences, etc.), adopting this criterion also in the assignment of study burses.

13. Each circumscription shall send a friar for the scholarly study of Capuchin history and spirituality, giving due importance to the necessity of such work in order to preserve the memory of our form of life and see to the formation of new generations.

14. The formation of the friars should prepare them to engage in a professional way the issues affecting society, even offering them the opportunity to live

among the poor for a good period of time before perpetual profession.

15. Academic specialization and degrees are to be seen as gifts to share in a spirit of fraternal service, not as acquired rights or privileges within the Order. Each circumscription shall discern its needs and, in view of these, identify the brothers to be sent to academic centers. Considering the costs involved, they should be judged to have the intellectual capacity and be of an appropriate age to fulfill such a course of studies. We should also take care to accompany the friars during the period of study. They are to understand clearly that full-time study is their work, and as such avoid taking on parallel activities. Having completed the academic degree, they are to be assigned to those activities where the acquired skills are of value and can be used in the service of the brothers, in research and in study.

### 3. The first work

16. We are called to integrate our life of prayer and work. We place all of our work, with its joys and hopes, as also with its struggles and anxieties, before the Lord so that with the whole fraternity we place our trust in Him: “Unless the LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE, THOSE WHO BUILD IT LABOR IN VAIN.” (PS. 127:1) PRAYER AND FRATERNITY ARE THE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS FOR OUR WORK: WITHOUT THESE THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF WORK WILL BE REDUCED TO A MERE EXECUTION OF REQUIRED TASKS, EMPTY OF INTERIOR LIFE AND VITALITY.

17. The first work of the friars is seeking union with God. The times of fraternal prayer are not a way to avoid our work and pastoral care or an escape from the human toil of work, but are a service that comes from our state of life as consecrated persons. Therefore no friar shall dispense himself from the primary task of liturgical and mental prayer, aware that when one prays he is interceding “on behalf of all humanity.” (Const. 49,1)

### 4. Minors at the service of all

18. The identity of the Capuchin friar is characterized by minority lived in fraternity; this becomes the criterion for the choice of our works. We are not called only to work for the poor, but above all with the poor. Let us avoid considering work as a means to personal self-promotion, in order to live always in a spirit of service.

19. Our charism as Capuchin lesser brothers is expressed in particular in those activities that situate us in the last place, sharing prophetically in the condition of those who are judged insignificant by consumerism and hedonism. This commits us to leading a simple life like the poor of the place.

20. Let us remember that the purpose of our work is not only to ensure our support, but to share our life with people, putting ourselves at their service as lesser brothers. Every circumscription of the Order shall have at least one structure to provide assistance and advancement for the poor. To this end let the ministers strive: a) to make competent and willing friars available to carry out this service; b) to assign some of our friaries to such initiatives; c) to assign a percent of our own income for the benefit of the poor. Closeness to and association with the poor will help us to review our style of life in many ways.

21. Our fraternity is made up of religious presbyters and lay religious. In our internal relationships and in ministerial work we avoid every form of clericalism that seeks social climbing, privilege, and power, which are deeply contrary to our identity as minors. Let us foster fraternal structures and attitudes where witness is given to collaboration, dialogue, and service.

22. Many of our works, as also other activities/initiatives, are sources of economic benefit. Many countries have taxes, such that a part of the income from all economic activity is put to the common good, financing charities and services for all. As lesser brothers we are to be responsible and honest citizens, always complying with fiscal obligations, without using strategies to avoid them.

23. Work for people outside the Order belongs to the charism of our origins. This is a way of working that entails: being employees of others and submitting to their conditions, renouncing personal and institutional attention-seeking, and accepting working conditions that are normally more demanding. When decided upon and shared in fraternity, this way of working is a window open to the world, a source of fraternal enrichment, a school of work, and a privileged means for our sharing with people.

### 5. We live from our work

24. The first Capuchins chose to live by having recourse to begging. Today the socio-cultural and ecclesial situations in which the Order lives demand that we support ourselves from our work.

Therefore we can take on, even as remunerated work, every type of activity, also outside the fraternity, that is honest and that allows us to live as minors.

25. Those who enter the Order with a profession, if it is not against our charism, shall continue to exercise it if such is necessary to contribute to the support of the fraternity.

26. The diminishment of the solidarity funds of the General Curia and of other external sources is to be taken and lived as a blessing, an opportunity to discern how to create new forms of self-support, trusting in divine Providence. Among these forms, let us prudently evaluate the possibility of establishing institutions or projects that respond to local needs and in which the friars can work.

27. In the context of contemporary society, the traditional questing – as was done for centuries – has gradually disappeared almost entirely. We believe, however, that the tradition of begging is something to preserve, renewing and adapting it to the socio-cultural context, finding alternative forms consonant with our being minors. For example, we may have recourse to the donations of persons and institutions in order to assure the minimum necessary for us and for the poor.

28. Structures built with contributions from the economic solidarity of the Order must become self-supporting by the labor of the friars that work there. Structures shall not be built if the friars are not willing to work there and support it themselves.

29. Keeping our interdependence in mind, the surplus of the fruit of our work, or other income, shall be made available to the Order for the needs of the circumscriptions and for the good of the poorest.

30. Economic autonomy is one of the objectives to be reached, if possible, in the management of ministerial services and in our structures. Since young circumscriptions are not always able to provide for themselves adequately by their work, it is suggested that the office of solidarity furnish materials and technical support to guide the reflections of such circumscriptions on economic sustainability, responsible investment, and self-help projects. It is important to provide health insurance and a retirement fund for the friars, keeping in mind the local situation.

31. Recourse to the service of paid employees in the fraternity is, in some situations, in conflict with our choice to be lesser brothers. All the circumscriptions are asked to make a serious and

rigorous examination of the hiring of employed personnel, which must be submitted to the discernment of all the friars in the local chapter and have the consent of the minister or custos with his council.

32. As lesser brothers, let us work with our employees with respect, cooperation, humility, and simplicity. Let us make them aware of our form of life, and relate to them fraternally and courteously rather than with a bossy mentality. At the same time, we should never disregard our responsibility as employers.

33. In regard to the employees that work in our fraternities and in our institutions:

- The local laws that protect the rights of duties of workers shall be observed;
- They shall be paid a just wage;
- Care shall be taken to give them an adequate, ongoing formation.

## 6. Brothers who work together

34. We esteem and give thanks to God for the work of the friars all over the world, which is expressed in varied ways, in both traditional as well as other more innovative forms. Let us remember that the primacy in all of our activities belongs to fraternal life and prayer, in the light of which discernment is made on our work. In fact, we wish to present ourselves to the world of today beginning with our identity as lesser brothers, in order to respond to the tasks that the Church asks of us and to the challenges that the culture and society of today put before us.

35. In the light of our fraternal charism, the grace of working commits us, as the Constitutions exhort, to take on works within the project of the fraternity, willingly submitting, in a spirit of obedience, one's own work to the discernment of the local fraternity and of the minister, accepting with a spirit of willingness even that which does not suit or satisfy us, as an occasion of personal maturation and of blessing.

36. Each of us has received various gifts from God. Each time a brother shares the gift received, he witnesses to the beauty and the attractive force of fraternal communion. Creative individuality in work, in harmony with the plan of a respectful and welcoming fraternity, brings joy and is to be encouraged.

37. Let the work of the individual friars be an expression of the whole fraternity. May the local chapter be the place where, sharing the efforts and the joys of different works, the friars support and mutually enrich one other.

38. Let us give priority to working as a team rather than as individuals, because this better expresses the values of fraternity and minority. It is necessary that all the friars commit themselves to working for common objectives, promoting the sense of belonging and participation, developing relationships of equality, appreciating and respecting one another's differences, and renouncing particular interests and personal self-seeking. The coordinator of the work should not behave like an authoritarian boss, but as a brother, whose serves to animate and coordinate the group such that all participate. He should foster communication and creativity, and courageously face conflicts.

39. Let all the friars feel responsible for the animation of fraternal life, and when they are called to carry out the service of minister and of guardian, let them be prepared and aware that such service is their first work so that they may foster the journey of the brothers and the quality of fraternal relationships. Guided by our Constitutions, let them promote the participation of everyone and the sense that each individual is valued.

40. The consumerist mentality measures the value of the person based on the role that he occupies in society, and above all based on what he produces, marginalizing the weakest. Let it not be so among us. In whatever state of health or age and in every situation of work, the friar is to be welcomed and enabled to give the best of himself. The work of every friar is to be valued independently of the salary received. May our communities be places of freedom, in which each can develop the gifts received with creativity, working faithfully and devotedly in a healthy balance with the other aspects of our life.

41. Two risks threaten our fraternal life. On the one hand there is overwork, which can become a pretext to distance oneself from the fraternity; in reality, the harder one works the more necessary it is that he remain linked to fraternal life. On the other hand, there is the risk of a disengagement from the tasks entrusted to us and a falling into laziness and a bad management of time.

42. As Capuchin Friars Minor we are a fraternity in which the lay brothers and the presbyter brothers enjoy the same dignity. It is the responsibility of the minister and his council to seek various forms

of apostolate such that the choice for the lay form of our life has a real space for expression and in which human and professional realization is made possible. The circumscriptions that dedicate themselves almost exclusively to parochial and sacramental ministry, with a mainly clerical formation in post-novitiate, will have difficulty passing on the importance and the beauty of the lay form of our vocation and in attracting young people to this style of life. Therefore, let the different expressions of our vocation be proposed, encouraging and appealing to all the brothers to make their natural gifts fruitful by means of a specialized formation, which will prepare them to carry out better the services entrusted to them.

43. One of the most marginalized groups in our society is the sick. We recognize the value of the presence of sick brothers in our fraternities. With their silent witness, in patience and in prayer, they collaborate in the building up of the fraternity. Let us recognize also the work of the brothers who take care of them in the fraternity, accompanying them generously and with love and deep respect.

44. Love and responsibility for our senior and sick brothers requires that the fraternity give them special care and attention. Let the fraternity ensure medical care and assistance, adapt work to their capacities, and encourage their gradual withdrawal from responsibility, service, and ministry, helping them in this transition since it is often a source of interior distress.

45. Considering that money is the fruit of the work of all the friars, the guardians and the ministers shall respect the "maximum sum" of expenditure established by the economic statutes of the circumscription (cf. OGC 4/4), making every choice with responsibility and transparency, in agreement with the local council and the circumscription. Therefore, all the circumscriptions are called to develop clear economic statutes in order to avoid arbitrary decisions and abuses of money by superiors.

46. In a spirit of belonging, all the friars shall hand over to the fraternity in their entirety the offerings, salaries, pensions, or other resources that they receive. In the same way, they shall not appropriate to themselves a ministry, function, or office, nor draw personal profit from it.

47. If a brother obstinately refuses to hand over to the fraternity all that he has received for work or for any other reason, his minister is obligated to admonish him with firmness, gentleness, and love, even having recourse to canonical warnings, if necessary, so that the brother might live what he promised.

48. The time of vacation is to be considered a moment of grace that the Lord grants to us, though not a right to arrange our time independent of others. Every fraternity should discern the best way to live such times, both in common and individually.

49. In planning our vacations, let us look to those who do not have such opportunities, due to unemployment or lack of means. Let us avoid imitating the affluent, and let us make our vacation consistent with our state of minority, possibly sharing them with the brothers and in solidarity with the most humble of our society.

50. Let us express concrete signs of gratitude toward the friars for their generous work.

## 7. In a spirit ready to exercise every type of apostolate

51. We Capuchin friars contemplate reality as the place where God reveals his beauty and mercy. In creation, in the human person, and in the poor we contemplate the face of Christ that continues to reveal itself in his kenosis and resurrection. Therefore, let our choices of work be the fruit of a discernment made in the prayer of the fraternity and in a spirit of minority, attentive to the socio-cultural context in which we live.

52. In order to commit ourselves to real, concrete decisions and actions, we need to keep our eyes open to what is happening in society, in the local Church, and in the circumscription of the Order in which we live. It is crucial for us to face the particular situations of the place to which the Lord has sent us, to be intelligent in discerning the ways of his will, and to act resolutely to fulfill them in a spirit of freedom and humility.

53. Carefully observing the world around us and listening to the concerns of the people allows our discernment to be better informed in order to:

- a) identify and value the activities of individual friars;
- b) make our fraternities meaningful to the people and able to relate to them;
- c) avoid proposing activities that are not required by the context;
- d) facilitate our presence and evangelical witness among the poor.

54. To better serve the men and women of our time, let our work be carried out with competence

and love. Therefore, starting from 'the principle of continual improvement':

- a) we recognize the necessity of specialization, updating it continuously;
- b) we assess the needs that call for our response;
- c) we plan aims and objectives properly;
- d) we give priority to team work and networking with other organizations;
- e) we evaluate the results and promote innovation.

55. Let the friars take on their commitments not just for the sake of financial gain, however necessary, but as a free response to the needs of the social context in which they find themselves, in collaboration with other free charitable initiatives.

56. One of the traditional forms of Capuchin ministry is the presence in shrines, where our brothers can genuinely encounter one another and God. The active presence of friars in these places is encouraged. Let them be pilgrims among pilgrims, open and available to welcome people pastorally, especially for confessions and blessings.

57. Let us value the practice of popular missions and the spiritual formation of the baptized, accompanying them in the process of conversion and of growth. Let us encourage greater creativity in the preaching of the Gospel and promote the integration of the baptized into the common life of the parish as well as reconciliation with the Lord and with their brothers and sisters.

58. Let us value and promote the participation of the lay faithful in the life of the Church, giving particular attention to the Secular Franciscan Order. Let us commit ourselves to their formation by means of workshops, courses, the publication of books, and the use of the web.

59. Let us share our charism with the laity, involving them in our works. Let us foster solidarity by means of volunteer service, giving people the opportunity to live the spirit of fraternity and minority by means of work that is joyful and freely given in service to the most needy.

60. The pastoral care of a parish is to be understood as entrusted to the whole fraternity. Whenever a parish is entrusted to us, the pastor shall not appropriate it to himself, but shall work in collaboration with the fraternity.

61. The ecclesiology of communion calls us to live our charism and our pastoral service as a gift to the universal and particular Church, in a spirit of itinerancy. Wherever we are present, as true



brothers of the people, let us willingly serve the growth of the local Church, collaborating willingly with the diocesan clergy and with other ecclesial structures.

62. We encourage the friars to 'leave the sacristies' and to work in the existential peripheries, where no one wants to go, bringing our charism as lesser brothers. By means of our work, let us live out the prophetic element of consecrated life in the Church.

63. Various circumscriptions have founded schools of every kind and level, which are very useful for parents in search of a quality education. Often we friars limit ourselves to occupying leadership or administrative roles, while it would be preferable for us to commit ourselves also to taking an active, professional part in teaching the various disciplines. This would help to reduce costs and to broaden access to young people of modest means and to the poor.

64. In social, educational, health care, or other works, let our presence be first of all as brothers and spiritual animators, transmitting our charism, creating communion and giving witness to fraternity, rather than only as directors and administrators. For these latter tasks, let us accept the help of competent persons who share the spirit of Capuchin-Franciscan mission.

65. Let the principles of JPIC serve as a point of reference in the choice or evaluation of our work. Let us concern ourselves with the care of creation: not wasting energy, reducing consumption, re-using recyclable materials, avoiding waste, promoting a critical reflection on our habits, and denouncing the businesses that attack nature. In our work let us motivate people to live in communion with creation.

66. Aware of the injustices and problems of the world of work, we contemplate the face of the suffering Christ in those for whom work is not perceived as a grace:

- In those without access to work;
- In those who bear unjust conditions;
- In children, women, the elderly, and in all those who are exploited;
- In the many poor who are subjected to humiliating and undignified activity (e.g. prostitution, trafficking in organs, the drug trade);
- In those who suffer because of unhealthy

working conditions;

- In those less qualified workers who are often marginalized by the world of competition.

To these persons we express our solidarity and we wish to support firmly those organizations that promote dignity and justice in the world of work in a concrete way.

67. Let us collaborate with institutions that work on behalf of the poor, the marginalized, and all the persecuted, Christian or not, and with organizations that promote peace, justice, and the integrity of creation. Catholic institutions and, in a particular way, Franciscan ones, are to be privileged, such as the Damietta Peace Initiative and Franciscans International, without excluding other local institutions, such as REPAM (Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network), REBAC (Congo Basin Ecclesial Network), and FAN (Franciscan Action Network).

68. The friars who work among the marginalized, the poor, or migrants, often do not receive any compensation for their activity. The ministers and the local fraternity shall willingly support the economic needs of these services, even by means of renunciations and sacrifices in ordinary expenses.

69. The technological development of recent years with the spread of the means of social communication, has significantly transformed society, and its effects are manifest in a new way of living, of communicating, and of establishing interpersonal relationships. This has created a new culture, with new ways of learning, which has given rise to the development of heretofore unknown opportunities for work. The new digital media also facilitate our work of evangelization, improve communication among ourselves, and assist the administration of our fraternities and institutions. Let us place our knowledge and skills of digital media at the service of the poor, who often are not able to benefit from them.

70. In this new culture, of which we are part and by which we are also influenced, let us be aware of the danger of an inappropriate and excessive use of digital media which creates a virtual world, with the risks of individualism, distraction, and wasted time. All of this weakens fraternal relationships and brings further problems that come from the wrong use of these media. Education in the appropriate use of such means should be a necessary component in the initial and ongoing formation programs of the friars. Formators, in particular, must be aware of the conditioning that comes from digital media, and suitably adapt their methods of formation.

## 8. Let us bring the announcement of salvation

71. The work of evangelization suggests a 'missionary conversion' of one's own apostolic life that can no longer be confined to our own structures and traditional activities, but is rather about a Church 'going forth.' Therefore, let the friars commit themselves to working with passion and enthusiasm, in particular in the service of the first proclamation of the gospel, in the Christian formation of communities and in all those places that today are 'peripheries.' May our 'going forth in mission' give priority to witness and service among non-Christians, by means of inter-religious dialogue and, when possible, the explicit proclamation of the Risen Lord.

72. The work of evangelization aims first of all to bring about an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ and to have people remain enthralled by him. This presupposes that the friars allow themselves in turn to be evangelized and renewed by a living encounter with Jesus Christ.

73. In our apostolic work, we should be attentive and vigilant in reading the 'signs of the times', in order to:

- a) faithfully carry out our form of evangelical life and our apostolic witness in the different regions and cultures;
- b) harmonize evangelization with the needs of people and their condition of life;
- c) open ourselves to dialogue with all Christians, with the believers of other religions, and with non-believers.

74. Let us encourage new ventures featuring international fraternities, either permanent or temporary, with the purpose of responding to people's search for and desire for God and to serious social emergencies (e.g. refugees, migrants, natural disasters).

*Approved in the meeting  
of the General Council OFM Cap.*

*Rome, January 8, 2016*