



Week ending 21 April 2017

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Centenary of Capuchin Presence



Pictured far right: Paul Koenig

On 20 March 2017, St. Joseph's Cathedral witnessed an historic celebration: 'The builders of the church in Arabia', a centenary of Tuscan Capuchin presence in the Vicariate of Arabia. Angelo Fiumicelli, 91, retired in Italy and Eugene Mattioli, 86, still active, both enthusiastic and wise, made the day an unforgettable experience for all.

The one-hour solemn outdoor Eucharist was followed by talks and a video presentation. Paul Hinder, the apostolic vicar of Southern Arabia was assisted by

special guests: the apostolic nuncio, Francisco Padilla, Kuwait; the general minister of the Capuchins, Mauro Jöhri, Rome; the provincial minister of the Tuscan Capuchins, Valerio Mauro, Florence, and 43 priests from the parishes of the Vicariate and about 2000 laity.

Entrusting a mission to a particular province of religious proved beneficial to the stable development of the church in a territory: 1) a steady flow of missionaries; 2) team spirit and commitment; 3) active participation of the home church; support and volunteer engagement. In Arabia the aim was not the conversion of the Muslims, but the pastoral care of the millions of labor migrants from all over the world.

Starting from the mission in Aden in 1916, the Capuchins from Tuscany persevered in extremely difficult conditions and steadily built up the church in the peninsula over the last century. With the oil boom, there was a consequent flow of large numbers of expatriate workers to the Gulf. The generosity and openness of the rulers of the gulf countries enabled the Capuchins to establish new foundations in Bahrain (1939), the UAE and Oman (1960s), and also in the other gulf countries.

Later, by the time of Giovanni Gremoli, who was apostolic vicar from 1976 to 2005, and also the last bishop of the vicariate to come from Tuscany, the province had become unable to fulfil the demand for more missionaries to assist the tens of thousands of Catholics who came to the Gulf countries. So Gremoli turned to other Capuchin provinces from India, Lebanon and the Philippines for assistance. He also sent laymen working in the Gulf for priestly training.

The migrant church of the Gulf is bursting at its seams but also a beacon of light in the effort of priests, religious and lay people to be the universal church, one in a diversity of nationalities, cultures and church traditions.

(Source: BICI)

Renewing our commitment to JPIC



For the first time in many years, the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) international commission in collaboration with the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference (NAPCC) held a workshop training for friars engaged in JPIC ministry and social works in North America and Australia. The theme of the workshop was "Renewing our Capuchin Franciscan commitment to the values of JPIC" and was meant

to train and form friars of the NAPCC into being JPIC animators in their various provinces. The training held at the Capuchin Retreat Center in Washington MI, brought together 15 JPIC animators from seven provinces, including from New York- New England, New Jersey, Denver, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Toronto, Quebec and Australia. In three days, the participants were trained on the theory and practice of JPIC and empowered to becoming JPIC animators in their various provinces. Benedict Ayodi and John Celichowski introduced the participants to the basis of our commitment to JPIC including the social teachings of the church, scriptures and constitutions. With the expertise and experience of Joe Rozansky OFM, Michael Lasky OFM Conv, and Marcia Lee, the friars explored the spirituality, values, functions and application of JPIC in our daily lives and in the society at large.

The most interesting part of the workshop was when each participant presented their work in the area of JPIC. It was amazing to learn how much work is being done in the various provinces of NAPCC. Some provinces run soup kitchens, homes for street families and the homeless, elder care and prison ministry. Others give direct support to the poor, undocumented, migrants and refugees. The St. Joseph Province (Detroit) has Cap Corps project for volunteers to support social projects. Some provinces collaborate with the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) and the Franciscans International (FI) to do advocacy on human rights both at the National level and the international level. Patrick Carolan the executive director of FAN spoke via Skype on the importance of networking and collaboration among the Franciscan families for social transformation.

At the end of the workshop, the participants took time to visit the Capuchin Soup Kitchen project in Detroit. As one of the largest soup kitchens in the region, it serves over 2500 hot meals per day and provides many other serves to the needy in Detroit. The participants experienced firsthand the ministry of JPIC in action. The friars got a tour of the entire project and its various services including the bread bakery, the bicycle repair, the soup kitchen, and the Garden of Unity. All these projects are meant to support the poor and the marginalized for charity and social transformation, thus putting our Capuchin Franciscan values of JPIC in practice.

+ RELIGIOUS BROTHERS DAY +



Franciscans ask pope to allow lay friars to be "leaders"

"As the church in the United States prepares to celebrate the first annual "Religious Brothers Day," Pope Francis sends cordial greetings to America's communities of brothers, together with his prayerful good wishes for the spiritual fruitfulness of their varied apostolates. Conscious of the immense contribution made by generations of brothers to the growth of the church in the United States through their schools, hospitals and other forms of religious and social outreach, the pope trusts that this day of recognition will confirm them in their distinctive witness of consecrated life and their generous service to God's Kingdom. He likewise

expresses his hope that their prophetic testimony to evangelical fraternity and ecclesial communion will act as a leaven for the renewal of the church in America and the building up of an ever more just society, respectful of the dignity and aspirations of all God's children." ~Pietro Parolin, *Vatican Secretary of State*

The elected leaders of the four main branches of the Franciscan friars formally asked Pope Francis for permission to allow their communities to elect lay friars to positions of leadership in their communities. "With us Pope Francis is looking at the possibilities for moving this project forward," Michael Perry, general minister of the Friars Minor, told Vatican Radio. "We left a letter as a formal request for a dispensation" from canon law requirements that in most religious orders with both priests and brothers only a priest can be elected to the top leadership offices.

Perry met the pope on 10 April along with the Capuchin general minister, Mauro Johri; the Conventual Franciscan general minister, Marco Tasca; and the Third Order Regular general minister, Nicholas Polichnowski.

The four different branches, Perry said, have spoken of the importance of the possibility of allowing lay friars to serve in an ordinary way in our respective orders."

The rules governing eligibility for leadership in religious orders with a strong mix of brothers and priests — especially if those orders, like the Franciscans, were founded without distinction between lay and ordained — has been going on since the Second Vatican Council.

The council's decree on religious life said, "Monasteries of men and communities which are not exclusively lay can, according to their nature and constitutions, admit clerics and lay persons on an equal footing and with equal rights and obligations, excepting those which flow from sacred orders." Still, for orders like the Franciscans in which most members are priests, the Vatican has insisted that ordination is a requisite for "the power of governance." It has vetoed the election of lay friars as superiors of orders that have more priests than brothers as members, even when the order's constitutions do not insist the superior be a priest.

At the synod of bishops on religious life in 1994, the question was raised repeatedly. Franciscan Hermann Schaluck, general minister of the Friars Minor at the time, told the synod that his order was founded by a layman, St. Francis of Assisi, who was never ordained a priest. "The charism of the order was not tied to ordination, but to a life of following the Gospel in a radical way."

The equal footing of lay and ordained friars, he said, should mean they both could be called to leadership roles. And he asked the Vatican that the possibility be "officially and juridically" recognized.

Responding to the synod members' propositions in 1996, John Paul II said, "A special commission has been established to examine and resolve the problems connected with this issue; it is necessary to await this commission's conclusions before coming to suitable decisions in accordance with what will be authoritatively determined."

"The order was founded by a layman, Francis of Assisi, who was *never* ordained a priest. The charism of the order was *not* tied to ordination, but to a life of following the Gospel in a radical way." — Hermann Schaluck, OFM general minister, 1994

The study appears to have been interrupted. In December 2015, the Vatican issued a document on the identity and mission of religious brothers. At the time, Jose Rodriguez Carballo, secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, said his office would ask Pope Francis for an *ad hoc* commission to study the question.



I am the Earth
And the Earth is me.
Each blade of grass,
Each honey tree,
Each bit of mud,
And stick and stone
Is blood and muscle,
Skin and bone.
And things that grow here
naturally.

And just as I
Need every bit
Of me to make
My body fit,
So Earth needs
Grass and stone and tree.



That's why we
Celebrate this day.
That's why across
The world we say:
As long as life,
As dear, as free,
I am the Earth
And the Earth is me.
~ Jane Yolen

U.S. Bombing in Syria: We Must Break Free from Retaliation

Statement of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, 11 April 2017

President Trump recently launched 59 cruise missiles at an air base in Syria in retaliation for an alleged chemical weapons attack within Syria. We, who are called to be Catholic religious leaders, mourn for all those that died in both of these incidents, and we denounce this use of violence which only exacerbates the habits and structures of violence. In fact, these habits and structures are part of the core root causes of this conflict, which has already killed over 300,000 people and led to almost 5 million refugees and 7 million internally displaced persons.

The president has continuously emphasized the “rule of law” and yet in this case it appears that he obtained no congressional approval, nor did he allow for formal due process investigating the facts of the incident. We strongly support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons’ investigation into this incident and call on all parties to provide access.

As Christians, we go deeper and turn to the example of Jesus who courageously resisted injustice, even with his very life, and offered compassionate and merciful justice humanity could not imagine. This week we enter into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus facing the violent structures of Jerusalem, risking his life, and providing a way to overcome through his nonviolent cross.

Pope Francis has clearly said that, “countering violence with violence leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are diverted to military ends and away from the everyday needs of young people, families experiencing hardship, the elderly, the infirm and the great majority of people in our world. At worst, it can lead to the death, physical and spiritual, of many people, if not of all” (Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace, Jan. 1, 2017). Thus, he called on all persons, especially government officials to use the Sermon on the Mount as the manual for peacemaking and to apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of their responsibilities.

CMSM executive director Capuchin John Pavlik says, “Our hearts were broken as we learned of the suffering inflicted upon Syrian families and children with chemical weapons. And our hearts were wounded a second

time in a violent response with cruise missiles bombing, destroying, and killing yet more. The U.S. response manifested strong military power but showed nothing of a united will to lift, rescue, and save suffering people from the ravages of war. The U.S. can be so much better than this.”

The issue we must face is not simply chemical weapons, but war itself along with the habits and structures of violence that enable it. The U.S. has too often been involved in killing thousands in recent wars, especially civilians and children, as we have seen most recently in Mosul, Iraq and our direct support for Saudi Arabia in Yemen. As we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s speech “Beyond Vietnam” on April 4th, we are reminded of his words that “war is not a just way of settling differences,” and it cannot be “reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love.” Hence, we recommit to Vatican II’s call that “it is our clear duty to strain every muscle to outlaw war” (Pastoral Constitution, 81). Further, we commit to Pope Francis’ call to make “every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence” (Nonviolence: Style of Politics for Peace) as we create a “culture of nonviolence...that has produced decisive results” (Letter to Bishop Cupich, Apr. 4, 2017).



Conrad Sump, who worked with the province for many years, died recently.

David Heffron was hospitalized recently for cellulitis infection.

Former friar Lance Kronzer was recently hospitalized with pneumonia and pulmonary embolisms.

Wilbert Lanser arrived from Nicaragua recently because of health concerns.

Erico Ortiz, a member of the province’s Liturgical Commission, recently underwent surgery to remove a tumor.

Lester Bach is recuperating at St. Paul’s rehab unit in Kaukauna WI following successful shoulder surgery.



- 19 Finance Comm Video Conf
JPIC Video/Zoom Conf
Timon Costello (B)
James Antoine (B)
- 20 HR Video Conf
- 21 Liturgical Comm Video/Zoom Conf
Helen Prejean, CSJ (B)
- 22 **Thomas Schmied (B)**
Earth Day
- 23 **Joseph Mattathil (B)**
- 23-24 Holocaust Remembrance Day begins
at sunset on Sunday, ends at sunset on Monday
- 23-26 NAPCC Mission & Dev Conf, Detroit
- 24 Treasurer’s Zoom Conf
New Ministry Focus Group Zoom Conf
Elroy Pesch (N)
- 25 Wellness Video/Zoom Conf
- 26 **Patrick Giffer (B)**
- 27-28 Provincial Council, Detroit
- 28 Public Relations Min Council, Milwaukee
Chapter Prep Video/Zoom Conf
- 30 **Nathan Linton (B)**
Anniversary of Dan Berrigan’s death (2016)



Our next issue will be published on 3 May