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## ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

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### NEWSLETTER

April 2013 • Malta

#### Conference meets in Malta

The Provincial Ministers of the English Speaking Conference gathered from April 8-12 on the island nation of Malta for the 88<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference. The Maltese Province of St. Paul the Apostle served as host of the meeting which took place at their Porziuncola Retreat House in the town of Bahar ic-Caghaq on the Northeast coast of the island. **Sandro Overend**, OFM, serves as Provincial Minister of the Maltese Province.

Malta is an island nation in the Mediterranean with Sicily to its north, Tunisia to its west and Libya to its south. It is a densely populated country, only 121 square miles in size with a population of approximately 452,000. Malta was part of the British Empire until gaining its independence in 1964 and, in part because of that, English is one of two official languages here (along with Maltese). This is one reason why the Maltese Province is part of the English Speaking Conference of the Order.



*Provincial Ministers of the English Speaking Conference along with General Definitior Francis Walter, OFM, tour the Co-Cathedral of St. John the Baptist*

Malta is reported to be the place mentioned in Acts of the Apostles 28.1-2, "Once we had reached safety we learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us extraordinary hospitality; they lit a fire and welcomed all of us because it had begun to rain and was cold." Legend has it that this is where St. Paul was shipwrecked in what is now called St. Paul's Bay. A statue marks his landing. It has long been an important island because of its strategic location between Europe, the Middle East and Africa and is the home of the Knights of St. John, more commonly known as the Knights of Malta.

You can learn more about the Province of St. Paul the Apostle by visiting their website at: <http://www.ofm.org.mt/>

## **New President and Vice-President for the Conference**

**Irish Provincial Hugh McKenna, OFM, elected VP**

On the final day of Conference business, the election of the new Conference Vice-President took place. The result of that election saw Provincial Minister **Hugh McKenna**, OFM, from the Irish Province, elected as the new Vice-President.



*Vice-President  
Hugh McKenna, OFM*

According to the Statutes of the Conference, it is only the Vice-President who is elected by the group. He then serves for two years under the current President and is essentially president-elect when taking the role. After two years of service, he becomes President of the Conference and a new Vice-President is elected.



*ESC President  
John Puodziunas, OFM*

At this meeting, Provincial Minister **John Hardin**, OFM, of the Province of St. Barbara (California), concluded his term as President of the Conference, and Provincial Minister **John Puodziunas**, OFM, of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province (Wisconsin) moved from his role as Vice-President into the President's role.

Both the new President and Vice-President have served as Provincial Minister of their respective Provinces since 2011 and had been Vicar Provincial of their Provinces prior to that.

## **Definitorium to elect new General Minister along with Conference Presidents and Vice-Presidents**

With the historic news of the appointment of our former General Minister, now Archbishop-elect **José Rodríguez Carballo**, OFM, to become Secretary of the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, now comes the task of electing a new General Minister to complete the two plus years left on the former General Minister's term prior to the next General Chapter.

Following Article 201.1 of the *General Constitutions* of the Order, the General Definitorium will gather in Rome along with the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the 13 Conferences of the Order to conduct the election. This is currently set to begin on Tuesday, May 21, 2013. As such, John Puodziunas, OFM, and Hugh McKenna, OFM, will be present as President and Vice-President of the ESC. Vicar General of the Order **Michael Perry**, OFM (Sacred Heart Province) will preside over the election.

Please keep this important moment in the life of our global fraternity in your thoughts and prayers.

## **Interprovincial Novitiate welcomes California/Australia Provinces**

At the unanimous recommendation of the members of the Conference Secretariat for Formation and Studies, the American (U.S.) Sub-Conference of the ESC accepted the request of the St. Barbara Province for full membership in the Interprovincial Novitiate in Burlington, Wisconsin. The California Province is expected to begin sending novices to Burlington with the next class beginning in August. With this action, all seven U.S. Provinces are now full members of the Interprovincial Novitiate along with the Christ the King Province of Western Canada.



The Secretariat also recommended that the Holy Spirit Province of Australia be allowed to send its novices to the Interprovincial Novitiate. This recommendation was also unanimously approved by the Sub-Conference. The Australia Province, an Associate Member of the ESC, had previously sent its novices to the novitiate in California.

## **American (U.S.) Sub-Conference receives interim report of ICC**

The Interprovincial Collaboration Commission which has been meeting diligently since the historic December 2012 meeting of all seven U.S. Province Administrations in Milwaukee, Wisconsin presented an interim report to the American (U.S.) Sub-Conference of the ESC.

The report highlighted ongoing work in the area of vision, missions and values; suggestions for greater collaboration and possible solutions for potential mergers. They will make a final report to the Sub-Conference in October. The ICC is chaired by Jack Clark Robinson (Our Lady of Guadalupe) and includes friars Michael Della Penna (Immaculate Conception), Dan Anderson (St. John the Baptist), Craig Wilking (Assumption BVM), Michael Jenrich (Sacred Heart), Regan Chapman (St. Barbara) and Dominic Monti (Holy Name). Dominic Perri serves as a facilitator of the group.

The ICC is an ad hoc committee of the American Sub-Conference of the ESC.

## **Joseph Rozansky, OFM, leads Provincials in Study Day on JPIC issues**

At each Spring meeting of the Conference, there is a day of enrichment dedicated to a topic chosen by the Provincials. This year's Study Day, brought Joseph Rozansky, OFM (Holy Name Province), General Coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation for the Order to the meeting to lead the Provincial Ministers in a day of reflection on the theme of "Justice and Peace and Franciscan Leadership."



*Joseph Rozansky, OFM*

During the presentation, Joe shared some examples of his eight-years of justice and peace ministry in the General Curia and some examples of how JPIC issues can be brought into the day-to-day of Provincial leadership. Joe offered that JPIC ministry should always be marked by what he calls "the three P's." He said, "It should be Practical, Persistent and Polite." Joe pointed out that looking at the example of St. Francis, he was first and

foremost practical. "Francis responded to God's invitation in a very practical way, rebuilding the chapel of San Damiano literally stone-by-stone; literally embracing the leper." He also spoke about how St. Francis' greeting of peace, our famous "*pace e bene*" was another practical example of even in words of greeting inviting people into conversion, inviting them into change. "And so, we need to also be encouraging people into practical solutions," Joe said. As for persistence, Joe reminded us that change can't be an invitation for only a day. "You have to keep at it, despite the difficulties," he said. And, always be polite. "We can be advocates who do so with kindness, compassion, love and joy. We have such a great example in Francis," he said.

## **Conference proposed Convocation of Lay Brothers**

Responding to an initiative that began among the lay brothers of the Province of St. Barbara, the ESC agreed to support a proposal to sponsor a Conference-wide Convocation of the Lay Brothers of the Conference.

The gathering would address the issue of the ongoing decrease in the percentage of Lay Brothers in the Order since 1965. Several General Ministers have commented on this phenomenon and have expressed their concern. The purpose of this gathering would be to study the reasons for the decline as well as review of places in the Order where the Brothers' vocation remains strong. It will also include plans for a concrete proposal for meetings of Brothers in other Conferences, and a suggestion for such a gathering at the level of the entire Order in preparation for the next General Chapter.

The Conference agreed to let the brothers in St. Barbara Province who have initiated this idea function as a planning committee. They will report back at the next meeting with a concrete proposal for this gathering.

## **Delegates appointed for Plenary Council**

The Conference appointed delegates for the upcoming Plenary Council of the Order which will take place from November 17-30, 2013 at the Congress Center of the Pallottines in Konstancin, Poland. The Plenary Council will look at the number of General Definitors of the Order as well as their manner of election; as well as items related to the 2015 General Chapter. Elected to represent the ESC were ESC President John Puodziunas, OFM, and former President John Hardin, OFM. Provincial Minister Gino Correa, OFM (Guadalupe Province) was elected as alternate.

## **Executive Secretary role made full time**

As part of the ongoing efforts at greater collaboration among members of the Conference, Provincial Ministers decided to elevate the position of Executive Secretary of the Conference from a part-time role to a full-time position.

Members of the Conference over the last several years have been moving towards greater levels of collaboration and cooperation among Provinces. To help facilitate this Conferential collaboration, the Provincials felt a full-time Executive Secretary would assist in keeping open lines of communication and development between the many Secretariats, Commissions and Committees

the Conference is responsible for. This expanded role will become fully effective by the end of this Summer.

The Conference appointed current Executive Secretary **Thomas Washburn**, OFM (Immaculate Conception Province USA) to serve in this new full time role for a three year term.

The expanded Executive Secretary position will be in a three-year trial period at which point the Conference will assess its effectiveness.



*Executive Secretary  
Tom Washburn, OFM*

## **Conference meets with Director of Franciscan International**

On Tuesday, the Conference met with Markus Heinze, OFM, who is currently serving as Interim Director of Franciscans International. Markus came to update the Conference on the current situation at FI which has undergone a number of downsizing and restructuring measures to deal with a budget shortfall. For more than 30 years, Franciscans International has represented the entire Franciscan Family working at the United Nations to address human rights injustices that impact the poor and most vulnerable.