



Conference of the Franciscan Family

Prot. N. 23/2025

Rome, 22 April 2025

At their locations:

**Brothers and Sisters
of the Franciscan Family**

A LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MINISTERS OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

In memory of the Holy Father Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace and good to all the brothers and sisters of the Franciscan Family.

With hearts filled with gratitude but also with deep sorrow, we, the General Ministers of the Franciscan Family, wish to share with you our farewell to Our Holy Father Pope Francis, who has returned to the house of the Father.

At this time, when our beloved Pope Francis has left us, we feel the urgency to reflect on the profound meaning that his presence had for us as sons and daughters of St. Francis of Assisi. It was not by chance that Jorge Mario Bergoglio chose the name of the Poverello of Assisi for his pontificate: this choice revealed from the very beginning a path of life and mission that he consistently followed until the end of his days.

A Pope Who Gave Substance to the Franciscan Charism

Pope Francis lived in a significant way the spirit of our Seraphic Father. How can we fail to recall his words spoken during his visit to Assisi on October 4, 2013: *“From this place of peace, where Saint Francis was born and lived, I repeat with the strength and*

meekness of love: let us respect creation, let us not be instruments of destruction! Let us respect every human being: let armed conflicts that bloody the earth cease, let weapons be silent, and wherever hatred gives way to love, offense to forgiveness and discord to union.”

Christ as the center, love for the Church, the primacy of prayer, the way of evangelical simplicity, closeness to the poor and the least, care for our common home, commitment to reconciliation, peace and dialogue: these were the pillars of the Franciscan charism that guided his Petrine ministry.

The Universal Fraternity

We recall with particular emotion when, in his message to the Franciscan Family on May 8, 2021, on the occasion of the centenary of the magazine “San Francesco Patrono d’Italia,” he exhorted us, “*Continue to move forward inspired by the figure of the Poverello of Assisi, who knew how to live essentiality by combining it with mercy toward all others, especially the poorest and most abandoned. Strive to translate Franciscan values into the concreteness of daily life, continuing to be attentive to the ‘signs of the times’.*”

His Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, particularly inspired by our Seraphic Father, will remain as one of the most powerful calls for universal brotherhood in our time, an invitation to recognize ourselves as all brothers and sisters in a world torn by divisions and conflicts.

Pope Francis reinforced this proclamation with the strength of his voice that he raised to remind the world of its responsibility before the presence and life of others, especially if they are migrants and refugees, victims of violence and war, homeless, prisoners, one of the many “invisibles” in our cities.

With his gestures and words, he presented himself as a true brother, urging everyone not to neglect children, the elderly and those living on the margins of a society that often chases profit. He also vigorously called attention to the value of women, helping to build a broad and well-grounded fellowship – a richness in the face of every one of us.

The call to walk together as a Christian community has given the Church a countenance of fraternity and the encounter with other cultures and religions a breath of hope

Caring for Creation

How can we forget the impetus Pope Francis gave to the care of our common home with the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, deeply rooted in Franciscan spirituality? It is good to remember this as we celebrate 800 years of the Canticum of the Creatures.

On November 4, 2020, addressing one of our families, he said, “*Saint Francis invites us to contemplate Creation with eyes of wonder and gratitude, not with the voracious*

attitude of those who exploit everything and respect nothing. May the Poverello teach you to empathize with everyone, to place your creativity at the service of the least, and to live a healthy tension toward truth and justice together with inner serenity". A reality where everything is interconnected and God is at the center of creatures and beings is much more than any ecologism and still awaits to be well explored and translated into concrete life choices for individuals and societies.

The Church of the Poor and for the Poor

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has dreamed of "a poor Church for the poor," following in the footsteps of St. Francis who espoused Lady Poverty. In one of his last meetings with Franciscans, on June 17, 2023, on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the Rule of St. Francis, he told us, "*Poverty is not a sociological theory or a fashion, but it is following Jesus on the path of humility and of being stripped down. It is a tangible love that becomes service and gift. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to always be joyful witnesses of this evangelical poverty that St. Francis lived, stripping himself of everything to follow the Lord.*" It seems to us that this message has matured over the years of his Petrine ministry and has always led us to refocus on what is essential. We recognize this as a ripe fruit from the Second Vatican Council, which not only inspired Pope Francis, but gave weight to his voice, as he drew from it in the fullest possible way.

An Invitation to Continue on the Franciscan Path

As we mourn his passing, let us welcome the spiritual legacy he left us as a precious treasure to be cherished and made to bear fruit. The best way to honor the memory of Pope Francis is to continue to live the charism of our Holy Father Francis with renewed commitment, proclaiming the Gospel with our lives before our words, striving to be instruments of peace in a divided world, and living universal fraternity with all creatures.

Thus, he taught us and requested of us: "*And in all this, dear brothers and sisters, you are called to live in fraternity, feeling part of the great Franciscan family. In this sense I remind you of Francis' desire that the whole family remain united, while certainly respecting the diversity and autonomy of the various components and also of each member. But always in a vital communion with one another, to dream together of a world in which all are and feel like brothers, and striving together to build it (cf. Enc. Brothers All, 8); men and women fighting for justice, and working for an integral ecology, collaborating on missionary projects and becoming artisans of peace and witnesses of the Beatitudes*".

We invite the entire Franciscan Family to raise up prayers of suffrage for the blessed soul of Pope Francis, so that the Lord may receive him into His Kingdom of light and peace, where he will finally be able to contemplate the face of Him whom he served with so much love on earth.

*“Praised be You my Lord through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.”*

With fraternal affection, in the communion that unites us all in Christ,

Your General Ministers and President



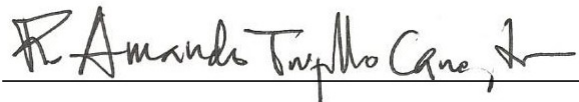
Br. Massimo Fusarelli OFM
General Minister



Br. Carlos Alberto Trovarelli OFMConv
General Minister



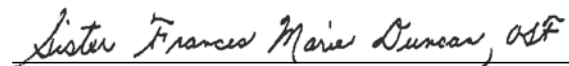
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