



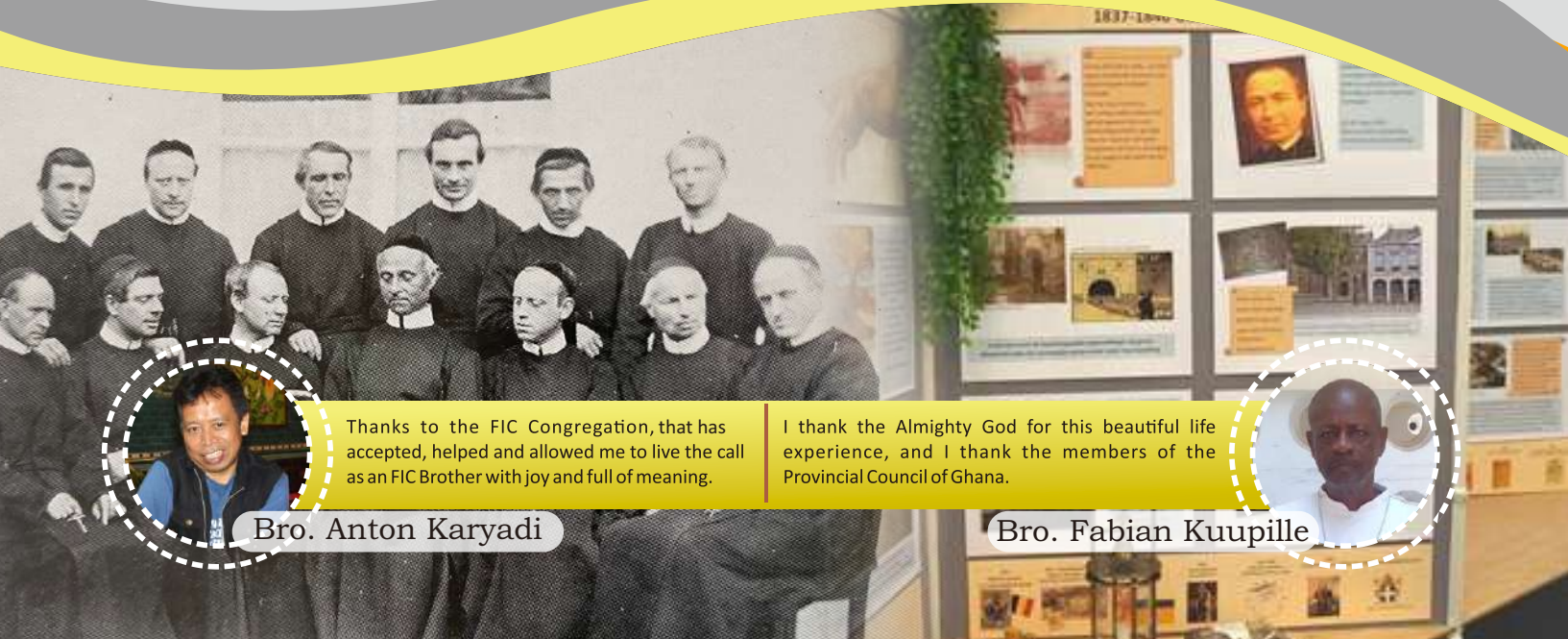
BROTHERS FIC

CALLED TO BE GOOD AND TO DO GOOD



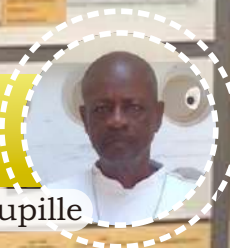
BROTHERS FIC / Vol.2 / No:11 / 2024

"Renewal of Our Consecrated Life and Mission In The Spirit of Synodality"



Bro. Anton Karyadi

Thanks to the FIC Congregation, that has accepted, helped and allowed me to live the call as an FIC Brother with joy and full of meaning.



Bro. Fabian Kuupille

I thank the Almighty God for this beautiful life experience, and I thank the members of the Provincial Council of Ghana.



Art.

5 In the church

Christ calls us to consecrate ourselves for the coming of the Kingdom; the Kingdom of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit". We do this as members of his Church, which Christ destined to be the leaven that permeates everything, to be the strong germ of unity, hope and salvation.



BROTHERS FIC
CALLED TO BE GOOD AND TO DO GOOD



Colophon

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From The Editor

This time, we offer readers ideas on the theme of the Brothers FIC Magazine: **“Renewal of our consecrated life and mission in the spirit of synodality.”** This is also the theme of the Brothers FIC General Chapter of 2024. The renewal of religious life includes the constant return to the sources of all Christian life, to the original spirit of the Congregation and adaptation to the changed conditions of our time. Renewal of our consecrated life and mission is inevitable in the Church and religious life. Such renewal is necessary to satisfy or appropriately respond to the significant needs of today's church and the world. To do this we have to net-work with people of good will, create a “culture of encounter”, listen attentively to the “cry” of people experiencing poverty and the rest of creation. In other words, we are embarking on a “synodal journey”, meaning that we intend to discern the will of God, not just as leaders but as a Congregation, whose members are engaged in mission in six locations around the world.

One means of bringing about renewal in religious life and mission is through chapters, through which we discern the will of God. 2024 is a year of chapters for the FIC Congregation. The discernment process is ongoing in the provinces. Amidst this discernment, we wish to share with our cherished readers the views of some FIC Brothers regarding the theme (above). Bro. Augustine, our General Superior, presents the spirit behind the subject under discussion, entitled “The Spirit of Synodality in our Life and Mission.” Bro. Raphael Besigrinee discusses the reasons and the fundamental principles of religious life renewal, while Bro. Remy Nyukorong gives a summative reflection on the core mission and Spirituality of the FIC Brothers, entitled “The Spirituality of the FIC Brothers and the Need of the Time.” From these reflections, we intend to deepen the meaning and purpose of our life and mission in the Church. We must continuously deepen the understanding of our calling, and strengthen our commitment to serving the Lord.

We are pleased to present the stories of two of our brothers willing to share their profiles as usual. Bro. Antonius Karyadi, from Indonesia who celebrates his 40th anniversary as FIC Brother, and Bro. Fabian Kuupile from Ghana, who just completed his sabbatical in Nairobi, Kenya. We hope their generous sharing will inspire our young readers and clarify the meaning of our consecrated life and mission. We also present you news from the first sessions of the Provincial Chapters that recently took place in our provinces. The rest are news in pictures, an article from the Vatican and a brief piece about Mary by Bro. Daniel Kanyada, from Malawi Province.

In the spirit of “Synodality”, let us continue to journey together in faith and mission in our efforts to proclaim the Kingdom of God. May the spirit of synodality strengthen our bonds as children of God and improve our ability to listen to one another with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for your attention and support to the FIC Congregation. We especially ask you to pray for the success of the FIC General Chapter, scheduled from 4 - 24 August 2024 in Wa-Ghana.

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The Spirit of Synodality In Our Life and Mission

Bro. Augustine Kubdaar FIC Superior General



What is our mission?

The "Essential Reflection" and chapter one of our constitutions speak clearly about the FIC Brothers' Mission. If I attempt to state it briefly, I will say that our life as Brothers FIC is uniquely dedicated to following the teachings of Jesus Christ. Our mission is to advance God's Kingdom through personal human growth (art. 1), community building, and service to others, particularly those poor and in need. We strive to proclaim the gospel through "Christian Education, Teaching and Formation, guided by the Holy Spirit. Drawing inspiration from Mother Mary as our Patroness, our mission is grounded in love, justice, and service, following the examples (and in the Spirit) set by our Founders: Mgr. Louis Rutten and Bro. Bernardus Hoecken (Arts. 7,8,9, and 10). As

a global community of Brothers, we prioritize contemporary and culturally sensitive approaches to spreading the faith and promoting human dignity. Collaboration, communal living and discernment, and prayer are central to our identity.

The Spirit of synodality and our mission

The Spirit of synodality is a vital aspect of the life and mission of the Brothers FIC. Synodality embodies a collaborative and participatory approach to decision-making and discernment within the community. It fosters a culture of open dialogue, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, where each member's voice is valued and heard.

In our life (Brothers FIC), the Spirit of synodality permeates every aspect of our community life and mission. It guides our communal discernment processes, ensuring that decisions are made collectively, in alignment with the will of God and the needs of the community. In our pursuit of the Spirit of synodality, we aim to foster unity and solidarity among our members and humanity, embracing the concept of universal brotherhood and recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings and God's creation. We value the diverse gifts and perspectives that each individual brings to our community. We are grateful for the gift of God's creation.

Furthermore, the Spirit of synodality extends beyond our immediate FIC community. It includes the broader areas where our apostolic presence is needed, shaping our engagements with other religious groups, the wider Church, and society (art. 5 and 6). We actively collaborate with various organizations and institutions, seeking common ground and collective solutions to

emerging challenges confronting humanity and our planet. Ultimately, the Spirit of synodality manifests in our commitment to living as beloved brothers (and sisters) in Christ, journeying together in faith, and discerning God's will for the greater good of all.



Renewal of our Consecrated Life and Mission

Bro. Raphael Besigrinee

Introduction

The word renewal ordinarily reminds us of making something new again or restoring the freshness of it. Even the Bible speaks of renewal or rest, referring to the physical renewal or rest of our bodies, which is required to continue functioning well. God Himself rested on the seventh day after the work of creation. In his calls to care for the environment, Pope Francis says, "*There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself*" (# 118). So, physical renewal or rest is a requirement for our frail bodies. However, another type of renewal is required to maintain our relationship with God: spiritual renewal. Renewal is a continuous process for all followers of Christ as we often drift away from the way and easily plunge into sin. Many people seek renewal through recollection, courses, and retreats to start afresh again.

Why renewal?

All life needs renewal. Religious Life as a state of life in the Church has gone through renewal before. *Perfectae Caritatis* (Perfect Charity), a decree on Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, articulates the general principles underlining the appropriate renewal of religious life and rules of religious communities. Adaptation referred to changes that were necessary to be made due to the "changed conditions of the times"; renewal referred to "a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration of religious institutes".

Why does Religious Life need renewal? Sean D. Sammon, in discussing "the future of religious life in vocation crisis", advanced the following reasons: Some congregations have served their purpose in the Church and will cease to exist. Others will continue but with a significantly reduced membership. Still, others will renew themselves, but they must first be courageous in responding to the real challenges facing our



world and Church today; second, members must be willing to allow themselves the experience of personal and congregational conversion; and third, they must rediscover the spirit of their founding charism. Sean further believes that "when a significant portion of members admit that their present life and the community's structures are neither personally satisfying nor appropriately responsive to the major needs of today's church and world", it is enough reason for renewal.

The Fundamentals of Religious Life Renewal

According to *Perfectae Caritatis*, the adaptation and renewal of the religious life includes the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time. This renewal, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Church, must be advanced according to certain standards. These include a). following Christ according to the Gospel, b). fidelity to the spirituality of the Founders, c). participation in the Church's

mission, d). encouraging adequate knowledge of the conditions of human beings, e). the signs of the times and the needs of the Church. These principles must be considered when advancing towards any renewal of religious life.

The definitive model of religious life is the following of Christ as outlined in the Gospels. Following Christ requires that all institutes hold the Gospel as the highest rule of life. The FIC Constitution confirms this in article 69: "We see the Good News of Jesus as our most fundamental Rule of life. We consider his word and example our guideline". Following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who was so closely connected to the Father, religious should reflect Jesus' attitude in all we say and do. Faithful to our profession then, and leaving all things for the sake of Christ (cf. Mark 10:28), religious are to follow Him as the one thing necessary, listening to His words and soliciting for the things that are of the kingdom and not of the world. Following Christ according to the Gospel entails growing towards Jesus, drawing life from Him, and making the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God our own message (const. art.4).

A fundamental aspect of revitalizing religious life involves maintaining faithfulness to the charism and spiritual essence established by the Founders. The Founder's spirit, explains *John Hardon*, is the Founder's soul, but in a unique way. It is his soul graced by the Holy Spirit and prepared long before the Founder was born. Why is there a preoccupation with being faithful to the charism of one's Founder? The Founder's charism is not only the divinely chosen means of bringing a religious family into existence; it remains the providential means of keeping the community flourishing today. Either the Founder's charism is a constant preoccupation of the community, or the community is in trouble. As religious, we must trust that the Holy Spirit speaks through the Church and will indeed bring special graces to those who honestly strive to recover the spirit of their founders today.

Participation in the Church's mission is another fundamental principle of religious life renewal. All religious institutes should share in the life of the Church, executing their tasks in adherence to



Bro. Raphael during his recent visit to Chile (November 2023)

their own characteristics. The mission of the Catholic Church is to proclaim through word and deed the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our task is to reveal Jesus Christ and His love to the world and proclaim his message through our apostolate. Vatican Council II has reminded all religious congregations that the proclamation of Jesus Christ in the world is to be undertaken by all the baptised, no matter which state of life they are called to live. Jesus revealed the mission to all Christians in the great commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).

What are the needs of the Church today? According to the *"Synthesis Report of the First Session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome"* (2023), the world's most significant need in this post-modern



Bro. Raphael (standing middle) on canonical visitation with the Superior General to the Brothers' School for the handicap in Buin (Chile, November 2023)

society, where Christendom is no longer the norm and secularization in all its forms has taken place, is a transformed people. What is needed is more transformed people who, like Jesus, are joyfully willing to devote themselves to the needs of others, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual.

The Church also needs a synodal movement as initiated by Pope Francis. Synodality is required to continue the Church's evangelizing mission in the world. This movement involves walking together and listening to one another but, above all, to the Holy Spirit. It includes all the faithful in the local Churches worldwide, and involves listening to all, especially to laypeople. The Pope hopes the Church might be able to connect more easily with the ever-changing contemporary society so that the message of the Gospel might permeate humanity effectively. The Synod report believes synodality goes hand in hand with mission.

Conclusion

The FIC Brothers are presently preparing for the 36th General Chapter of our Congregation. One of the tasks of this gathering, a critical discernment process of the congregation, is to "to keep the heritage of the Congregation alive, and also to promote appropriate renewal". Brothers are

putting forward proposals for discussion at this gathering, all geared towards renewing aspects of our life. These proposals, like proposals from previous years, raise a number of relevant questions. What present human needs would our Founders respond to if they were still alive today? What needs or groups of people in our society would they choose to serve? What apostolic ventures need to change to serve the present-day needs?

Our world and Church today are facing challenges, and religious life is not immune to them. Some religious congregations are facing extinction; some are going through minimal survival and renewal. At this time of secularization in the Church, lack of vocations to religious life, influence of information technology, and numerous human and societal ills, we need to discern ways to re-evaluate our mission and chart our future. Let us therefore distance ourselves from anything that might hinder our ability to hear the Word of God. This is not an easy task. It demands serious contemplation and prayer, helping us to know who Jesus Christ is and His message for us today. Only when we are in love with Jesus Christ and His gospel message will we grow to resemble Him closely and come close to doing His will.

Welcoming the 36th FIC General Chapter 2024

Bro. Valentinus Daru Setiaji

Undeniably, the past five years have been very eventful, reshaping global society from the unrelenting environmental crisis to the enduring Covid-19 pandemic. Presently, we are experiencing numerous escalating wars despite several efforts for peace. These societal shifts demand the Church's attention and concern, especially as we witness the suffering of our fellow brothers and sisters around the globe. We must respond appropriately in our evangelizing efforts as a Church or Congregation.

Given this context, amid the Church's synodal journey, a series of ecclesial discussions will climax in October this year. Pope Francis, who initiated this movement, sees it as a way to bring about renewal in the Church and respond to society's present needs. It is expected to overhaul the system and structure of the Church's operation while preserving her rich traditions and cultures that have stood the test of time. In so doing, the Church's presence in society shall continue to be relevant and significant so that God's mission entrusted to her will continue. The FIC General Chapter 2024, in line with this vision, is a spiritual exercise to be undertaken by members of the Congregation. Through the delegates from different backgrounds, functions, and capabilities, we wish to open our hearts to listen to the Holy Spirit and discern God's will in the realities that emerge in the Church and society.

Amid societal and ecclesiastical swings, we recognize the importance of the 36th FIC General Chapter, which is planned to be held in Wa, the Upper West Region of Ghana, from August 4 to 24 this year. Like the Synod on Synodality, this six-yearly chapter is a crucial opportunity for the Brothers to promote appropriate renewal within

the Congregation while keeping their rich and unique heritage alive (see FIC Constitutions art. 119). Your prayers and support are invaluable for the success of this event.

It is the spirit and method of synodality that we wish to employ in the General Chapter this time. After intensive discussions and consultations with the Provincial/RHN Leaders and some selected brothers, the GC discerned the theme of the chapter as: **"Renewal of our Consecrated Life and Mission in the Spirit of Synodality"**. This theme encapsulates some essential aspects, such as renewal, consecration, mission, Spirit, and synodality. These are brought together and visualized in the chapter's logo, clearly representing our collective journey.

Knowing that the General Chapter is the most significant gathering of the Congregation, we meticulously adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Constitutions and the previous General Chapter resolutions in its preparation. As Article 119 of our Constitution affirms, the more thorough our preparation and the more deeply involved the people are, the more fruitful and impactful our chapter will be.

In line with that, the General Council (GC) organized the preparation in phases: long-distance and short-distance preparation.

1. Long-distance preparation

- During the Congregational Conferences (Con-Con) in Ghana (2022) and Indonesia (2023), discussions were held, leading to an agreement on the Chapter membership as required by General Chapter 2018 Resolution no. 4B. The delegates of the 2024 General Chapter are as follows:
 - i. The ex-officio members (four GC members plus five Provincial and

- Religious House Netherlands/RHN Superiors),
- ii. The elected members (two from Chile, six from Ghana, nine from Indonesia, two from Malawi, and two from RHN),
 - iii. A non-elected member (the General Treasurer).

They all make up a total number of thirty-one (31) Chapter delegates.

- During its 19 - 21 September 2023 meeting, the GC appointed Bro. Valentinus as the coordinator, and Bro. Raphael as secretary of the General Chapter 2024.

2. Short-distance preparation

- The Superior General issued the Convocation letter of the General Chapter 2024 to the Provinces and RHN on January 16. This complied with FIC Constitutions article 120.
- Following the official announcement of the 36th FIC General Chapter 2024, the GC held several meetings in which they reached a consensus on various crucial aspects. These include the chapter logo, prayer, agenda, the GC report, and other matters.
- This is the logo of the chapter.



The logo indicates the Holy Spirit, who energizes and guides the General Chapter as a fraternal celebration marked by “communion” and “participation.” These are nicely represented by the chain-like symbol in the inner circle and the dove on top of the frame. The Holy Spirit, who inspires the FIC consecration and shapes its mission, also instills dedication to unity and collaboration with all FIC collaborators and people of goodwill. The mutual interconnection between the Church, as our Mother, and the FIC Congregation is represented by the two open circles embracing one another, which serve as the frame of the logo.

As the Congregation embarks on this vital journey, may the synodal process of the Church in which we are engaged awaken in us a lively consciousness of a journey in which all brothers, as well as our collaborators in God's mission, are united. In this journey we are called to listen wisely to one another, to learn through dialogue, and share our faith experiences with each other, with the Church, and the society. This period of grace challenges us to express creatively our fidelity to Christ and his Church, carry out His mission joyfully, and build solidarity with others in accordance with the spirit of our Founders.

The General Council invites all brothers and our dear faithful readers to stand in solidarity with us through prayers for the upcoming FIC General Chapter. As finely expressed in the logo, we wish that the Holy Spirit inspires the Chapter with an unwavering faith, a clear sense of purpose, and a shared responsibility towards our community and mission. We all believe that our spiritual connectedness is an invaluable support for a fruitful chapter, providing strength, guidance, and God's blessings to all involved. The Chapter Prayer is printed below as an invitation to our readers who want to be generously involved spiritually in this crucial journey of the FIC Congregation. We are indeed grateful for your unwavering support.

PRAYER for THE 36th FIC GENERAL CHAPTER 2024

Loving God,
As Brothers, we recognize the sacred connection of communion
that unites us and calls us
to actively participate in your holy mission,
begun by your Son, Jesus Christ.
Our journey through the 2024 FIC General Chapter process
is a turning point in our shared commitment
to your transformative work.

Our humble submission
places this Chapter process in your loving hands,
seeking inspiration and divine guidance for all members.
May the decision-making
be informed by a deep feeling of communion,
that our lives and those we serve are intertwined.
Let your Spirit guide us to respond to the signs of the times

Lord Jesus, our Brother,
pour your Spirit on the FIC General Chapter delegates,
and let this conference revitalize our consecration and mission
in the spirit of synodality.
May the Holy Spirit inspire humility,
confidence in God's providence,
joy, perseverance, and creative obedience to God's will,
in all who participate in this congregational exercise,
all for God's glory and the well-being of the poor and needy.

We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary,
your Mother and Patroness of our Congregation,
to help us on this precious pilgrimage.
May her protection shield us throughout the Chapter.
As brothers and messengers of love,
we trust you, our everlasting Saviour,
to guide us, now and forever.

Msgr. Louis Rutten and Bro. Bernardus Hoecken:
pray for us. (Amen)

GENERAL COUNCIL

Joint Meeting FIC-CMM

Bro. Raphael Besigrinee



The collaboration between FIC General Council and the Brothers of Our Lady Mother of Mercy (CMM) leadership continues through joint fraternal encounters. This year, the meeting of the two councils took place in the FIC General Council office, Prins Bisschopsingel 22. Sharing experiences and inspirations has always been the primary purpose of our encounter and collaboration; thus, the FIC Brothers reported on two of their international meetings and a canonical visitation.

They gave a brief retrospective sharing on the FIC Journey to Spiritual Enrichment at the CB Sisters' convent from 1 to 21 October 2023. The theme of the encounter was "*Called Together and Sent to be the Bearers of Good News in a Joyful Life*", and attended by 23 brothers from our four provinces.

From 25 October to 19 November 2023, Bros. Augustine Kubdaar and Raphael Besigrinee made a canonical visitation to Chile, which now consists of 8 brothers: 3 Chilean, 2 Spaniard, 2 Indonesian and 1 Dutch. They live in two small communities: San Antonio and San Luis, both in Talca. This year, they celebrated the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the first brothers in the province, a celebration we were privileged to witness.

The third event was the preparation for the FIC General Chapter in Ghana this year. The preparation for this event begun around the theme "*Renewal of our Consecrated Life and Mission in the Spirit of Synodality*". Thirty-one delegates from all our provinces and the Religious House Netherlands are expected to attend this meeting from 4 to 24 August.

The CMM General Board also briefed the house on several undertakings including the general picture of the CMM congregation, emphasizing on the new mission in Zambia. On 1 May 2022, four pioneering brothers opened the new CMM community in Kawambwa. A little less than a year, they were ready to receive the first five students in the newly established Technical school. Currently, the school has 50 students in both the carpentry and the tailoring departments of the school.

They also reported on a workshop for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It took place in Rome and was organized by the *Care and Protection Commission of UISG/USG*. About 133 participants from 90 congregations were represented. The workshop aimed to equip participants with skills in safeguarding vulnerable persons.

Lastly, the CMM Brothers reported on associate membership in their congregation. With the decline in new vocations in Europe in the 80s, Congregations were worried about the continuation of their mission and charism. This was the feeling of the CMM in the Netherlands as well. In the 90s, the Congregation of CMM Brothers began accepting lay people as associate members. These people want to share their lives with the Brothers without becoming brothers. They want to live out the essential charism of the Congregation in the context of their own lives, for example, in their work and family. They participate in the mission of the congregation by committing to a specific work and connecting with the community. Currently, they have nine members only in the Dutch province.

We held this meeting in a relaxed and cordial atmosphere. Each side felt supported by the other in our common mission of providing our members' best spiritual and material needs.

GHANA

First Session Provincial Chapter, Ghana



The official opening session of the Provincial Chapter of Ghana took place in the St. Louis conference hall from 21 to 27 January 2024, under the theme **“Deepening Our Religious Identity As Brothers FIC in the 21st Century.”**. Bros. Fabian Bezel and Godwin Kuu-Ireme led the opening prayer service on behalf of the Provincial Council - Ghana. The Provincial Superior, Bro. Seregeous Dery, welcomed all delegates, the facilitator, Rev. Fr. Dominic Apee and the chapter functionaries to the week-long encounter.

In his welcome address, the Provincial Superior outlined the key points of the Chapter after which he took participants through the daily programme, highlighting the role of functionaries in bringing success to the Chapter.

The Chapter Moderator led participants in a recollection on the first morning under the

theme, *“Deepening Our Identity as FIC Brothers in the 21st Century”*. He made a three-point presentation, focusing on “FIC Brothers being Consecrated Men”, with particular reference to VITA CONSECRATA. The second and third parts reminded the Brothers of the history and charism of the FIC Congregation.

Activities lined up for the Chapter included sharing of expectations, joys and worries of participants, the Provincial Council's report, discussions on the report, and the election of General Chapter delegates. The Chapter process was inspired by the daily prayer services every morning and the Eucharist, which concluded the day. The final topic was the correction, discussion and consideration of 34 proposals to the Provincial Chapter presented by individual brothers and communities.

(Taken from “Information General Council” (IGC) No. 2, 2024)

MALAWI

First Session Provincial Chapter, Malawi

Chapter delegates in Venray Cottage Conference room

The first session of the Provincial Chapter of Malawi began with a prayer service at Venray FIC Cottage in Mangochi on 22 February 2024. The theme “*Transformation and Growth of the Malawi Province in the Spirit of our Founders*” was inspired by articles 9 and 10 of the FIC Constitutions, denoting the 'Spirit of our founders' and 'protecting their heritage'. The Chapter Moderator, Rev. Fr. Jester Banda OCD, led participants in a recollection on the first morning based on two themes: *the power of silence in transformation and growth*, and *Mary as a model of transformation and growth*. This spiritual exercise sufficiently

prepared delegates for the main discussion of the chapter. These include the presentation and discussion of the Provincial Council report, the financial report, presentation, discussion and consideration of proposals to the Provincial Chapter. Issues on communication and the FIC Journey to Spiritual Enrichment 2023, formed part of the discussion. The three-day meeting ended successfully on 24 February with the election of General Chapter delegates.

(Taken from “Information General Council” (IGC) No. 2, 2024)

INDONESIA

First Session Provincial Chapter, Indonesia



Indonesia province held a pre-chapter session in Roncalli Retreat House - Salatiga, from 29 to 31 December 2023. This pre-chapter was a preparation for the Provincial Chapter, to be held in four sessions: two before the General Chapter 2024 and two after. The main issues on the agenda included the discussion points of the Provincial Chapter, establishing of committees and their job descriptions, and determining the dates of the Provincial Chapter sessions.

As a spiritual support, the Province formulated a "Chapter Prayer" which is prayed by brothers during communal and private prayers. The prayer is meant to encourage the involvement of each brother in the chapter process, ensuring the renewal of our life and work. The prayer committee was tasked to prepare prayer services to be used in the communities.

The first session itself was held from 5 - 8 March 2024 at the same venue and attended by all delegates. Father Edy Purwanto, the administrator of the Archdiocese of Semarang, led the Eucharistic celebration.

Father Setyo Wibawa, SJ and Prof. Budi Widianarko M.Sc. delivered very rich and inspiring inputs to the delegates, giving them relevant inspiration on issues related to the Brothers' vocation, religious leadership and the education apostolate.

Delegates then delved deep into the core matter of the chapter, namely the presentation and discussion of the Provincial Council report, the Provincial Treasurer's report, and the presentation and processing of proposals. The session ended with the election of the 2024 General Chapter delegates, thanks to the able directorship of the moderator Fr. Ignatius Budiono.

The theme of the discernment process is *"In the Spirit of Brotherhood Actualizing the Identity of Brothers FIC in Accordance with the Times"*. Hopefully, this theme will inspire the brothers to do God's will. The delegates believe that growing together in brotherhood will actualize them as truly FIC Brothers, empowering them to respond to the needs of the present time.

(Taken from "Information General Council" (IGC) No. 2, 2024)

CHILE

First Session Provincial Chapter, Chile

Chile Province successfully conducted its first session of their Provincial Chapter from Sunday, April 7 to Wednesday, April 10, with the theme: *“United and Sustained by Jesus, We will be Witnesses of the Gospel”*. The event in a retreat house called Betalpu, was moderated by Mrs. Sandra Robles, a theologian from the Catholic University of Maule, in Talca. All eight (8) brothers of the province were in attendance.

In an opening prayer service, Bro. Yohanes Krismanto invited delegates to be encouraged by the Spirit of the risen Jesus at the beginning of this provincial discernment process. After the welcome address by the Provincial Superior, Bro. Lucio Torres, the moderator led the meeting in a reflection on synodality, followed by a personal reflection and a time of sharing. This paved the way for

the day's business, namely forming committees to manage the Chapter's affairs. These include the agenda, the finance, chapter message, and communication committees.

In the rest of the days, delegates delved into the essentials of the Chapter, covering five areas: the FIC mission in Chile, the community of brothers, spirituality in religious life, religious life and synodality, and ecology. The moderator concluded this discussion with a presentation on the Apostolic Exhortation “*Laudate Deum*”. The four-day session culminated in a plenary sharing on the presentation and the election of delegates to the General Chapter 2024.

(Taken from “Information General Council” (IGC) No. 2, 2024)

R H N

Reflection at Home (The Way of The Cross)



As part of Reflection at Home, the working group organized a “Stations of the Cross” celebration on 21 March with the theme “Behold the human being—a way to life.” This was held in the chapel of the residential care centre De Beyart in Maastricht, starting at 16.30 hrs. The same celebration was also held on March 19, the feast of Saint Joseph, in the Joseph Chapel of the City Monastery in The Hague.

Central to this celebration of the Stations of the Cross in Lent was the person of Jesus of Nazareth: how he made his way to life through suffering and death. We use images of the fourteen St. Peter’s Church stations in Hilvarenbeek. The stations are enlarged fragments that want to show the essence of the various moments on Jesus’ Way of the Cross. All participants received a beautiful booklet, based on the publication by Martien van Woerkum and Cees Remmers “See the

Man - Stations of the Cross”, Uitgeverij Abdij van Berne, Heeswijk, 2010.

After reflecting on the “Stations of the Cross” in the chapel of de Beyart in Maastricht, the brothers and their guests gathered for a sandwich meal in the “Kras” guest room. Some of the participants expressed that the way to reflect on the “Stations of the Cross” was very special and touched them very much on how to be in solidarity with the people who suffer, are lonely, suppressed, and rejected.

By. Theo Riyanto, FIC (basically taken from the Website of “Broeder van Maastricht”)



At a former convent of the Augustinians in Domusdela (now Hotel Marienhage) in Eindhoven, during a "City walk" of the General Council, Religious House Netherlands Council and Staff (April 2024).



At de Beyart during a General Council visitation to the Brothers, 24th April 2024. Bro. Augustine Kuubdar made a picturesque presentation on the latest situation of the FIC provinces.



A session of the "FIC Spiritual Journey 2023 - 2024" in Chile Province. The Brothers and lay people often come together for such spiritual exercises.



Inauguration and blessing a Boarding School (Wisma Putra Kusuma – WPK) in Ketapang by Mr. Alexander Widyo S., STP, MSi, Secretary of the District of Ketapang and Mgr. Pius Riana Prapdi Pr. (bishop of Ketapang diocese), Indonesia.



During the concluding ceremony of the FIC Spiritual Journey 2023/2024 in Ghana Province. (L-R, standing): Bros. Didas Toogumo (Animator), Jonas Porekuu, Prosper Ganye, A priest, Isidore, and Elijah Abugri) (squatting L-R): Bros. Edmond Mopuuru and Callistus Yengdem.



Brothers FIC in Malawi, with representatives from Dynapharm, during a Provincial Day gathering in 2024.

Being an FIC Brother to Others

Bro. Anton Karyadi, Bandungan



I was born into a Catholic family and received baptism as a baby, with the name Antonius. From my family, I was given the name Karyadi. My family taught me to go to church. Every Sunday, I joined some children who attended the Eucharistic celebration. At church, I liked and admired the priest leading the Mass. I also often saw some nuns and a religious brother in a white habit attending mass. As a child, I was more attracted to priests.

In my teenage years, I devoted myself to serving as an altar boy with dedication. I actively participated in Catholic youth activities within the parish, such as reading during the eucharistic celebrations, joining communal prayers like the Rosary, and group Bible studies. These engagements brought me immense joy and fulfillment.

After graduating from State Elementary School, I entered Pangudi Luhur Junior High School in my village (Kaliduren; Sedayu Parish) in West Yogyakarta. My school had an English and Religion teacher named Bruder Sutiarta. While in the first grade, I started to understand the term "Bruder" (Brother). Actually, I have a maternal cousin who is a religious brother. However, until I

graduated from junior high school, I did not know that my (elder) cousin was an FIC Brother. When he came home to the family, I never heard anyone call him "Brother". Everyone called him by his name. At that time, I called him "Kang Tukir" myself. I was unaware of his full name: Bro. Martinus Tukir Handoko, nor did I realize he had become an FIC Brother. I also have a cousin on my father's side who is a nun. During her home visits, I continued to address her as "Sister." It was not customary at that time for Brothers and Sisters to visit home frequently.

While I was studying at the Pangudi Luhur Sedayu Teacher Training School (TTS), two Brothers were our teachers: Bros. Yosep Kuwat and Yulius. While here, I became increasingly captivated by the Brothers and felt drawn to the idea of joining religious life. My impression of them was that they were intelligent, disciplined, and devout individuals. They served as dedicated teachers who truly cared about their students, making efforts to know each one by name, even in a classroom of around 40 students. They were approachable and often greeted students. Simply put, they lived a life filled with happiness and enthusiasm.

The relationship between the Brothers, teachers, and students was very close and motivating. Initially, I had little enthusiasm for attending TTS. My father's insistence led me to enrol in that school, although I had also been accepted to the state high school, which I personally preferred. My father, a humble farmer, desired and wanted me, at all costs, to follow in the footsteps of our elder brothers from the village who graduated from TTS and became teachers. At that time, the president issued a directive for the establishment of nationwide elementary school system to combat illiteracy. As a result, graduates from TTS were highly sought after for employment. I now understand that attending Teacher Training School was not solely driven by my father's wishes; rather, it was guided by a higher power — the will of God. I believe God directed me towards the path of becoming an FIC Brother. In 1981,

following my completion of Teacher Training School, I promptly commenced the initial formation process to become an FIC Brother in Muntilan.

After three years of initial formation, I was allowed to make my first vows, precisely on the 2nd of July 1984, in Semarang. It was indeed a happy occasion for me that I was accepted as an FIC Brother. Being an FIC Brother means "to be brothers to one another and to all humankind both in receiving and in giving love." (FIC Constitutions, Essential Reflections). Starting from my family of origin, I was raised to be a brother to others. I am grateful that I was blessed to be born to my wonderful parents, Lourentius Dirja Utama and Catarina Kiyem, who loved God, loved each other, loved me, and raised me in a good and faith-filled Catholic home. I come from a humble family of four children, and am the second child. I have an elder brother and two younger sisters. Growing up in this family, I was taught the importance of love and support among siblings. We were encouraged to live harmoniously, helping, accepting, and empathizing with one another, fostering warmth and creating a welcoming environment where everyone felt at home. I am deeply thankful to my family for instilling in me these fundamental virtues, which have shaped my ability to live cooperatively with others.

Many virtues instilled in me by my family have shaped my journey towards becoming an FIC Brother. One stark example is the ability to coexist harmoniously with fellow brothers and other individuals from diverse backgrounds. I am called to embody brotherhood universally, transcending distinctions of descent, tribe, or culture. The essence of being an FIC Brother lies in extending fraternal care to all, without bias or discrimination, with a special emphasis on supporting those among us who are vulnerable and in need. I am truly grateful to the FIC Brothers, especially my formators at the initial level (Postulancy, first and second-year Novitiate): Bros. Eustatius, Yohanes Warisa and Bro. Savio respectively. I am truly thankful and grateful to all of them for guiding and properly training me to be who I am today.



Bro. Anton Karyadi (third from right) together with Indonesian Participants of the OASIS 2014 in Wahlwiller, The Netherlands.

After taking my first vows, I received an apostolic assignment as a 2nd-grade elementary school teacher and also accompanied boarding children in Ambarawa. I learned to be a brother to the children and fellow teachers. I learned to be a brother to others more widely when I got a study assignment in Yogyakarta. I met various people: fellow students, priests, candidates for priesthood, nuns, and parishioners around my community. Likewise, when I had the opportunity to study in the Philippines, I faced more complex challenges and was blessed with many opportunities. I was challenged to build friendships with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. I realized how amazing brotherhood is. Brotherhood that transcends language and cultural boundaries. I felt accepted by everyone. I was recognized and accepted as their brother. I am deeply grateful for the assistance of others, which has enabled the fulfilment of all my tasks.

I am grateful that the FIC Congregation has given me other apostolic tasks that have developed me. I once had the task of being the postulant master. I tried to live up to the spirit of the FIC Brothers. I tried to share all my potential, especially to become a brother to the postulants. I was also once the Provincial Superior of the Indonesian province. My experience taught me how to be a brother according to our FIC Constitution. Being a leader to the brothers and implementing the Chapter Policies and

Recommendations was both a challenging and a profound learning experience for me. Likewise, when I was assigned to be the Director of the Roncalli Retreat House, I was challenged to learn to be a brother to others, especially those who adhere to the consecrated life. The apostolic tasks assigned to me by the FIC Congregation really helped me to live my life as an FIC brother.

The year 2024 marks a long journey of 40 years of continuous learning to become a true FIC Brother. I experienced ups and downs in my growth. Nevertheless, I feel like I have developed into a brother to others. I tasted the fruits of God's calling to religious life as an FIC Brother. I am hopeful in the promise of the Gospel of Mark 10: 29 - 30, which says, *Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.* Wherever I am sent, I find brothers. I am never alone. I am truly happy to be called an FIC Brother. While I acknowledge that I am still growing as an FIC brother, I am confident that with the grace of God and the unwavering support of my fellow brothers, friends, and family, I am steadily progressing towards fulfilling God's will and my aspirations in life.

Now, I realize that the older I get, the less easy it is for me to learn to be a brother to others. I acknowledge that physical and psychological limitations can hinder the establishment of brotherhood. I feel more limited in my ability to manifest love and make others happy. The temptation to fulfil one's own needs, physical health, and mental health can lead to an attitude of only paying attention to oneself. Therefore, I continue to ask God to help me not to become an FIC Brother who only cares about myself. This can destroy the unity of the brotherhood. Hopefully, I can be involved in building a brotherhood of mutual love and happiness wherever I am.

I am grateful to the Lord God, who has called and accompanied me as an FIC brother. Thanks to Mother Mary for always protecting, and inspiring me to follow my holy calling. Thanks to my family



Bro. Anton Karyadi in the Rubber plantation in Belitang; he was accompanying Bro. Augustine Kubdaar (Superior General) to visit Belitang Community. (2023)



Bro. Anton Karyadi (Second from left) then a member of FIC Indonesia Provincial Council during the Provincial Chapter 2018.

of origin, who have prepared me to respond to the call of God as an FIC Brother. Thanks to the FIC Congregation, that has accepted, helped and allowed me to live the call as an FIC Brother with joy and full of meaning. Praise be to the merciful God!

(Bro. Anton Karyadi celebrates 40 years as FIC Brother in July 2, 2024. He is in Bandungan community)

My Call and Mission as an FIC Brother

Bro. Fabian Kuupile



Society (YCS) Sector Secretary and an altar boy. These Sisters encouraged me and even referred me to the FIC Brothers in Wa.

When I completed teacher training college, I was posted to my alma mater, Nemora Middle School, where I handled many responsibilities, also in the Church, such as choir master, Laity Council Chairperson, member of the Readers Association and Catholic Young Organization (CYO) Organizer. All these activities helped model my life and prepared me for religious life. Like St. Paul, my mother, friends, colleagues and relatives who knew me very well never believed I could become a religious brother. Still, through prayers and my determination and willingness to change, I could answer God's call to the Religious Life.

Article 15 of our constitution says “As Brothers, we know ourselves to be called together and thus sent out to continue the work of Jesus. He went around doing good, he was a witness to the truth, he came to serve, he came to redeem, and he brought the liberating message of love. He invited us to place ourselves completely in the service of this Kingdom”.

It was a vocation Sunday, and two Presentation Brothers were in our school, Gbewaah Teacher Training College, Pusiga, in the Upper East Region of Ghana, to launch a vocation rally. They outlined and enumerated the role of the Religious in the Church. I was inspired by the message and decided to think seriously about it, since I was torn between joining the priesthood and the religious life. However, I got more inspiration and felt called to the Religious life. This feeling became strong in the Teacher Training College through Sisters Rebecca and Rose from the USA, then teachers there. They were hardworking, dedicated and loving. My contact with them changed my whole life and perception of the Church. Then, I was elected the Christian Community Chairperson, Young Christians

When I was accepted to start initial formation in 1986 at 30, together with my colleagues and enlisted for the medical examination, I was unsuccessful the first time. I was asked to come back in two weeks. When I went back the second time, I was successful. The night before my departure for the formation house was one of the most challenging times in my life because I suddenly realized I was not worthy enough. But there is a saying that “God writes straight on crooked lines.” The morning of my departure, I was still struggling to decide when, all of a sudden, late Rev. Fr. Leo Dabuo, the then Parish Priest of Fielmuo, a God sent, drove in, packed my luggage in the car and bundled me into the vehicle. Fr. Dabuo further offered me valuable counselling, encouraging me to answer God's call. Another challenging moment was in the formation house, where I noticed that everything was completely new and strange. Despite all these, I started my initial formation.

Time went quickly, bringing the year to a close. Unfortunately, my Canonical year novice master did not recommend that I continue my formation for reasons best known to him. This time, I saw the hand of God interceding for me. “If God is for

you, who can be against you?" Thanks be to God that the then Novice master could not give any meaningful explanation to the Provincial Council to justify my disrecomendation, so I was allowed into the second year novitiate by the then Regional Superior, late Br. Albert Ketelaars.

On the day of my first profession, it started raining heavily as early as 4.00 am, and I wondered how my family members would make it to the Eucharistic celebration. Just ten (10) minutes before the Eucharist was due to begin, Fr. Leo Dabuo again, and the late Fr. Gervase Sentu arrived in two cars with my parents, friends and relatives. How relieved I became!

I am sixty-seven (67) years old now (2024) and have lived the Religious life in the Brothers FIC Congregation for thirty-four (34) years. During these years, I held different responsibilities in different communities. These include House Superior, Community Bursar, Community Secretary, Board Member of St. Francis Xavier Minor Seminary and Nandom Senior High School. I was elected a Provincial Councilor and appointed Temporary Professed Brothers Coordinator and Second Year Novice Master from 2006 to 2012 (6 years).

As a professional teacher, I taught at different levels, namely primary, junior high, and senior high schools, as well as the minor seminary. I worked as a classroom teacher, Headmaster in various schools, Guidance and Counseling Coordinator and Principal of a Technical/Vocation Institute in the Government sector.

After retiring from the Government sector as an English teacher, I became Headmaster of the Brothers FIC Private Schools: FIC Education Complex, Wa and FIC Jubilee School, Nandom. Currently, I am teaching English language at Louis Rutten Senior High School (LORUT), Wa.

In my development as a temporary professed brother, I attended the nine-month course for young religious at the Institute for Continuing Formation (ICF) in Cape Coast in 1993. In 1997 and 2017, I participated in the Brothers FIC Spiritual Journey in the Netherlands and a



leadership workshop in 2006 in the Netherlands, organized by the congregation.

The Need to Renew Our Call and Mission Individually and Communally

To yield greater good to the Church, religious life, a life consecrated by the profession of the evangelical counsels, and its necessary mission today may continue to be of greater value, it must go through renewal. We must advance this renewal according to certain fundamental principles. The purpose of religious life is to help the members follow Christ closely through the profession of evangelical counsels. As religious, we should remember that even the best changes made following the needs of our age may not yield much fruit unless directed by a renewal of the Founder's spirit. The renewal of religious life includes the constant return to the sources of all Christian life, the institute's original spirit, and its adaptation to the changing circumstances. This renewal, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Church, must also be advanced according to the example of Christ outlined in the Gospels.



My Sabbatical Experience

Having worked for thirty-four (34) years, I got tired, triggering “spiritual dryness”; therefore, I requested a spiritual renewal (Sabbatical). On 8th August 2023 under the captainship of Rev. Fr. Joseph Gatamu, we started the four-month sabbatical program with the theme: “*Put in your net into the deep*”. The deep of rest, self-care, self-rediscovery, inner knowledge and spiritual development. Thirty (30) participants from seven different African countries started the four-month journey at the *Saint John Paul VII Sabbatical Center, Murang’a* (Thika - Kenya East Africa). It was an incredible journey, a beautiful moment; I got into the boat as a stranger carrying my baggage. I sailed with thirty friends. We got into the boat, tired. We sailed joyfully. Our lessons were deeply insightful yet fun. Our filled classes were full of play, and our social evenings merrier. Now, I am up to the show: renewed, re-energized, revived, rejuvenated, and filled with zeal to relive

my life as a religious. My net is packed with bread and fish. The bread and fish of Christ, who has been my coxswain, driving the boat, has been the 21st Sabbatical Group of 2023.

On spiritual renewal as a religious in the FIC Congregation, there are many ways of renewing oneself communally or individually. These can be done through monthly recollections, annual retreats, FIC Spiritual Journey and sabbatical programs. I encourage all religious to seize the opportunity to have a personal renewal and encounter with God through sabbatical program. These programs help us keep the fire burning by adding more firewood to the fire in our daily lives. I thank the Almighty God for this beautiful life experience, and I thank the members of the Provincial Council of Ghana. A well-deserved standing ovation goes out to each of you. Barka!

Reflections on the FIC Brother's Mission and Spirituality

Bro. Remy Nyukorong



Introduction

For me, the FIC Spirituality can be summarized as follows: faithful communion with Jesus Christ and his mission; fraternal community life; practical love of God and neighbour through "Formative-Christian-Education" of ourselves and the youth (others); remaining open to the signs of the times and the prompting of the Spirit; venerating Mary our mother and patroness; and committing ourselves to the continuous growth of the Kingdom of God, in ourselves, in our community, in the Church, and in the world (FIC Constitution). This is my believe and what I aspire to be. I ask for God's grace and strength.

Brothers FIC maintains an active spirituality

Our founder's faith is active. A missional spirituality. We don't own the mission. The mission of Christ drives FIC spirituality. Based on the story of Jesus and his own experience, our Founder (s) believed that generosity toward

neighbours united him with God. Indeed, love of God and neighbour are inseparable. Love is not first for God, then neighbour. Loving God in neighbour. The heart can never hold this love. It must be concrete and practical. Thus, the FIC Christian lifestyle continues Christ's mission. As Jesus, did, we glorify the Father by declaring the Kingdom and showing needy people God's love.

We were sent to spread positive news

Understanding Christ is the foundation of all Christian spirituality. Msgr. Rutten realized Jesus preached more than a lovely message about an ethereal kingdom. His statements didn't shatter hopes. He followed through on his words. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, raised the dead, and showed compassion to sinners to show God's love. Thus, FIC Spirituality must centre on Jesus as the evangelizer of the poor. This image ought to affect every area of our lives.

My first encounter of the FIC Spirituality

I met the FIC Brothers in Nandom Secondary School. The 1970s saw several FIC Brothers living at Mt. Zion and teaching in the secondary school. Brothers Albert Ketelaars, Arnold Smal, Everard Verhoven, Luke Bangnikon, Gregory Rupert Tang, and Calistus Tang were notable. The Brothers were dedicated, Godly, gentle, humble, respectful, demonstrated affective love for the youth with preferential option for the poor, and aware of the local poor and needy. Excellent folks, they did many excellent things. This inspired me to become a brother FIC to share their life and mission. Having joined the FIC Brotherhood, I am grateful and have no regrets. Many brothers in our various provinces are still committed to their religious lives. Unfortunately,

some of us are diverting from our life's mission and spirituality. Community living has become more difficult, and some brothers live "a free lifestyle."

Integration of prayer and the apostolate

Prayer and the apostolic life must be interwoven. We carry the world with us to prayer, and prayer propels us out into the world. Our founders were persons of prayer. Msgr. Rutten encourages us to let Christ and his gospel illumine the different aspects of our lives. We are asked to have a personal conversation with Christ about our experiences among the impoverished, including the signs and countersigns of the Kingdom, our personal and inner emotions, community possibilities, and more.

Mary, our Inspiration

We can reflect on Mary's maternity, prayerfulness, and willingness to act. Mary's parenting is seen as she attends to the needs of the newlyweds at Cana, noting when they have run out of wine for their guests. This is a sign of "happiness, love, and plenty." Many families today have run out of "wine" as a result of loneliness, unemployment, illness, and other challenges. Mary, an "attentive and concerned" mother, avoids self-centeredness and notices when others no longer have wine in their lives.

My proposal

In our Congregation, there should be a renewed emphasis on actual and personal relationships with the poor, a call to critical thinking and study of the reasons of poverty, a sharing in the poor's position so that they can evangelize others, and a call to conversion. Based on the above, I propose the following:

- Our apostolic focus should be on evangelizing the poor and needy as a proof of God's presence on earth (Mt 11:5).
- We must cultivate a sense of community in our apostolic work to support one another in our common vocation.



- Evaluating the contemporary world wisely "in the light of faith", and fired with apostolic zeal, we may be more helpful to people.
- Our Congregation must strive for ongoing conversion, as advised by St. Paul: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rm 12:2).
- Evaluate the province's work, revitalize mission in each province, consider inculturation, and empower the poor to lead their own evangelization and liberation.
- The mission of our communities should be based on the communitarian love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The emphasis should be on living with one another as brothers, giving special attention to the elderly and sick, and seeking to inculturate and insert ourselves among poor people to "make our solidarity with them effective."
- Prioritize pastoral service (Charitable works) over income generating activities.

Conclusion

All FIC family members should prioritize spiritual rejuvenation and reappropriation. Losing touch with our spiritual legacy makes us less FIC Brothers. If we historicize this heritage like biblical fundamentalists and become irrelevant in the present world, we may as well not exist. We cannot discard our spirituality or confine it to its most fundamental form. We must individually and collectively return to our roots and reinterpret them in light of our historical context.

Pope at Mass: Cultivate a Renewed Vision of Consecrated Life

By Vatican News staff reporter

Pope Francis presides over Mass on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord on 2 February, which also marks the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life.

In his homily on Wednesday evening, Pope Francis took his cue from the feast of the Presentation of the Lord which is celebrated on 2 February each year. The Pope recalled two elderly people, Simeon and Anna who are waiting in the Temple for, “the fulfilment of the promise that God made to his people: the coming of the Messiah.” Pope Francis noted that Simeon *is moved* by the Spirit; “then *he* sees salvation in the Child Jesus and finally *he takes him* into his arms.”

What moves us?

The Pope then considered these three actions by looking firstly at what moves us? He explained that like Simeon, the Holy Spirit “enables us to discern God's presence and activity not in great things, in outward appearances or shows of force, but in littleness and vulnerability.” He then posed the question; “who mostly moves *us*? Is it the Holy Spirit, or the spirit of this world?” On this World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life, the Pope was joined in Saint Peter's Basilica by members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and he remarked that “this is a question that everyone, consecrated persons in particular, needs to ask.”

He went on to say, “the Spirit moves us to see God in the littleness and vulnerability of a baby, yet we at times risk seeing our consecration only in terms of results, goals and success: we look for influence, for visibility, for numbers.” The Spirit,



commented the Pope, “on the other hand, asks for none of this. He wants us to cultivate daily fidelity and to be attentive to the little things entrusted to our care.” Pope Francis stressed that it was important for consecrated persons to examine their interior motivations and discern their spiritual movements, “so that the renewal of consecrated life may come about, first and foremost, from there.”

What do our eyes see?

The Pope then turned his attention to the second question, *What do our eyes see?* He noted that God looks upon us with a “compassionate gaze”, and gives us “new eyes to look at ourselves and at our world.” It is a gaze, he said, “that does not stop at appearances, but can enter into the very cracks of our weaknesses and failures, in order to discern God's presence even there.” In off-the-cuff remarks, the Pope noted that it would do people good “to visit our elderly religious brothers and sisters, to look at them, to talk, to ask, to hear what they think. I think it will be good medicine.”



The Lord, underlined Pope Francis, “never fails to give us signs that invite us to cultivate a renewed vision of consecrated life.”

“Let us open our eyes: the Spirit is inviting us amid our crises, decreasing numbers and diminishing forces, to renew our lives and our communities,” he said. During his Homily, the Pope also warned against the temptation “to go backwards, for security, for fear, to preserve the faith, to preserve the founding charism.” “Neither Simeon nor Anna were rigid,” he said. “They were free and had the joy of feasting.”

Embracing the Lord

Finally, the Pope focused on the third question: *what do we take into our own arms?*

“Sometimes we risk losing our bearings, getting caught up in a thousand different things, obsessing about minor issues or plunging into new projects,” yet, Pope

Francis said, “the heart of everything is Christ, embracing him as the Lord of our lives.” The Pope warned, “if consecrated men and women lack words that bless God and other people, if they lack joy, if their enthusiasm fails, if their fraternal life is only a chore, it is not the fault of someone or something else. It is because our arms no longer embrace Jesus.” He continued by saying that when that happens, “our hearts fall prey to bitterness, to complaining about things that do not go like clockwork, to rigidity and inflexibility, to the illusion of our own superiority.”

A renewed vision

In conclusion, Pope Francis invited all consecrated people to “renew our consecration,” asking what it is that “moves” our hearts and actions, what renewed vision we are being called to cultivate, and above all else, let us take Jesus into our arms,” just like Simeon and Anna did.

Mary, Our Patroness and Example

Bro. Daniel Moses Kanyada



Since childhood, I have been attending several devotions of Mary but blindly. Once, I dedicated time to ponder the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and this experience greatly enriched me both spiritually and morally. When I reflect on the life of Mother Mary, I realize that I miss a lot. I realize that my everyday life can change others in their way of living if I embrace the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model of my life.

Mary exemplifies the Christian way of life that all believers are called to follow. She is a model of virtue, faith and obedience. As the mother of Jesus, Mary is a symbol of motherhood and

caregiving. She is also a symbol of faith, as she believed in God's plan even when it was difficult and impossible in human thinking. Her obedience to God's will is also an important lesson for Christians. Mary's willingness to follow God's plan, even when it was difficult, is a lesson in perseverance and trust.

As a model, Mary teaches me many things. One important lesson is that of humility. Even though God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, she did not consider herself above others. She was a servant of God and devoted her life to serving Him. Mary was also patient. She waited patiently for God's plan to unfold, even when it



was difficult. This teaches us that sometimes we need to wait for God's timing, and trust that He has a plan for our lives. Mary's life also teaches me the importance of prayer and forgiveness. She forgave those who hurt her, such as when Joseph thought of divorcing her. This teaches me the importance of forgiving those who have hurt us, even when it is hard. Prayer purifies the soul; through this purification, the entire person can be perfected. In the end, a person can differentiate good things from bad, and in so doing, brotherhood is manifested in me and the others. When praying, let us always ask Mary to intercede for us, and indeed, she is ready, for she knows her son better than us (John 2:1-12)

The life of Mary also teaches us charity and humility. She cared for the poor and the marginalized, and we can learn from her example to reach out to those in need. Despite her condition, she travelled the distance to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She could have stayed and waited for others to serve her; after all, she was carrying God's Son in her womb. The visitation of Mary brought happiness to the house of Zechariah (Luke 1:39-45).

Finally, Mary teaches us the importance of obedience and hope for God's will. She was willing to do whatever God asked of her, no matter how difficult. She believed that God would provide for her, even when she did not know the future. She accepted the will of God, disregarding

what people may think of her (Luke 1:38). This teaches us to have hope, even amid uncertainties.

I am motivated by the life of our Mother Mary; It warms my heart to realize that it doesn't need a person to be holy, to be virtuous, or to be morally upright, to merit her love. Her love for us is unconditional. Mary proved to me that my way of life can be a mirror to others. As brothers FIC, we hold Mary in high esteem as our patroness, willingly placing our lives under her special protection (FIC Art. 12). Sharing Mary's life with others through our preaching is our responsibility. Our way of life should reflect hers in all aspects. Through her way of life, she gives us good examples of how to be good and do good. We should preach about Mary and her life wherever we go. As an apostolic congregation, we have to make our apostolate conducive to those we are working with.

In conclusion, Mary is a powerful reminder that we are all called to live a life of hope, faith, charity and obedience to God's will. Her life was not easy, but she persevered through all of the difficulties that she faced. Mary's life is a testament to God's ability to work through anyone, no matter the circumstances we find ourselves. May we always seek for her intercessions in all we do.





BECOMING AN FIC BROTHER

We are a community of lay-religious men, who dedicate our lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He continues to teach us to be children of God and brothers to all people. Since the foundation of our congregation in 1840 we have had a special interest in the education and formation of young people, especially in poor areas.

We experience this life choice to be both demanding and gratifying. Because of this deep experience we continue to attract young men to our community.

Every candidate brings in his own experiences, gifts and talents. However, it takes some time for a young man to determine if his choice for the Brothers FIC really is his life choice. Likewise, it takes some time for the congregation to determine if a candidate can be accepted as a brother. For it is in the interest of the candidate and the congregation that every individual brother can live a happy and fruitful life.

That is why every candidate must go through a period of formation.

Content of the formation

Every candidate and young brother receives a theoretical and a practical introduction to our life and spirituality. The formation program clarifies how we can grow as human beings, as Christians and as brothers. The program is particularly aimed at the following:

- enriching the development of the candidate as a person;
- reflecting on essential questions concerning their future and their vocation;
- introducing them to the ideals and spirit of the founders of our congregation;
- creating an opportunity to both the congregation and the candidate to make a well-considered decision.

Stages of the formation

1. Postulancy - Whoever feels a vocation to share the life of the brothers FIC can apply for the postulancy by contacting the formation-master or the provincial superior in his area. You find all the addresses at the side of this page. After a number of assessments you go through a preparatory period, called the postulancy. This period normally lasts about one year and gives both the candidate and the congregation the opportunity to get to know each other.
2. Noviciate - After this period, provided the candidate is admitted, the noviciate begins. This marks the start of the life in the congregation and normally takes two years.
3. Temporary profession - After the noviciate the candidate can bind himself by his temporary vows. He does so with the intention of binding himself for life in the future. However, it is a good thing to bind oneself only temporarily in the beginning.

In this period, which normally lasts six years, the young brother can develop his vocation and grow into the daily life of the congregation and its apostolate. The formation continues by integrating the three main dimensions of the life as a brother: to pray, work and live in a community. This period is officially concluded with the final profession.



Interested?

If you are interested in the details of our formation programs, you can contact the following persons:

1. Ghana

Bro. Aaron Nee-ru

Address:

Brothers FIC,
P.O.Box 229, Wa (UWR) Ghana

Phone:

+233-0209354386
+233-0540806498

Email:

vocationpromotionficghana@gmail.com

2. Indonesia

Bros. Ag. Marsanto, Ant. Teguh, and Albert Pratama

Address:

Jl. Kartini 2 Muntian 56411
Indonesia

Phone:

+62 (0) 293 587361
+62 821 2345 6962

Email:

agemars@yahoo.com
teguhnugrahafic82@gmail.com

3. The Netherlands

Bro. Wim Luiten

Address:

Prins Bisschopsingel
22, 6211 JX Maastricht, The Netherlands

Phone:

*31 (0) 43 3508373

Email:

wpluiten@brothers-fic.org

4. Malawi

Bro. Moses Mgunda

Address:

Brothers Maryview,
P.O.Box 51075, Maryview-Malawi

Phone:

*265 (0) 991397026

Email:

pcmhouse2019@gmail.com

5. Chile

Bro. Patricio Guentelican Perez

Address:

Casilla 647, Talca-Chile (Postal)
Residence:

11½ Sur - 23 Oriente No. 3711,
Villa San Antonio - Talca

Phone:

+56 997747108

Email:

pegp40@gmail.com



▶ Bro. Augustine Kubdaar (middle) with Fr. Mintara SJ (far left) and Fransiscan Sisters of Heythuysen in the garden of the Sister's house in Ambarawa (during a friendly visit in 2023)



▶ FIC Brothers of Chile Province with chapter functionaries at the end of the first session of their Provincial Chapter (April 2024)



▶ Bro. Bonaventura Zeca Menezes and his pupils in his Primary School, Becora-Dili, Timor Leste



▶ The Provincial Superior of Malawi (middle) with four brothers who have renewed their vows. From left: Bros. Daniel Kanyada, Moses Mgunda, Lawrence Sitima, Mike Mbato and Chancy Mfune (has left the Congregation)



▶ Bro. Frans School and Mrs. Wilma (former TEAM FIC) in a friendly conversation during the farewell celebration of Mrs. Wilma in de Beyart (2024)



▶ Bro. Clement Nangpiire (far right) with FIC co-workers of In Service Training Centre, Wa (2021)