



# CONGREGATION OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER 12 July to 15 August

Newsletter Nº 1

## EXPLANATION OF THE LOGO

The concentric and eccentric circles of the logo show the dynamism and the interconnection of our lives with that of God and with the others. They also symbolize, that it is in Him that our life finds its fulfilment and in in Him it maintains itself in the process of continuous renewal.

Jesus washing the feet of his disciples challenges us to practice hospitality, by being his hands that soothe and heal the pain and the suffering of humanity, through our generous service, especially to the poorest of the poor. Franciscan minority, represented by the symbol of a Tau, invites us to be Sister minors, humble and simple, after the example of St. Francis and of our Founders.

The secret of an FHIC more fruitful life lies in the active contemplation of the motherhood of Mary, the Immaculate Hospitaller, allowing Christ to grow in us and reflecting the tenderness and the mercy of God in this world. It is the movement of the Spirit, source of living water enfolding the earth that

## INNAUGURAL EUCHARIST OF THE XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER

On 12th July, the forty seven Chapter Sisters, with His Eminence, the Cardinal Aquilino Bocos Merino, assessor of the Chapter, and Fr. Juan Francisco Martinez Saéz, vd, moved from the main entrance of the Mother House to the Shrine of the Immaculate Hospitaller, to celebrate the Eucharist, invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit.



In his homily, Cardinal Aquilino said that the readings that had been proclaimed “are two great beacons of light that illuminate the reality of the Congregation and awaken, in those who meditate upon them and accept them in faith, attitudes of openness, of ‘amazement’ of acknowledgement, blessing, prophetic service and hope”.

He further highlighted, that the “Chapter Members can discover in the Church of Antioch what it means to be always under the surprising action of the Holy Spirit and how to extend the glance and the heart to the different and to the new that emerges in our world, today. The Spirit encourages us to cross the Hospitaller frontiers, to expand





*the Tent of Hospitality and to stretch out our hand to the more needy. Indeed, this motivates us, to continue with the prophetic mission, that transmits understanding, tenderness and mercy.”*

At the end of the homily, His Eminence Cardinal Aquilino stressed on the importance of unity, highlighting:

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*“Today, the Mother House opens out its arms and embraces all the Sisters: those who are present here and those spread over different continents.”*

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### **OPENING SESSION OF THE XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER**

At the opening session, the Superior General and President of the Chapter, Sr. Maria da Conceição Galvão Ribeiro, in the message that she addressed to the Chapter Sisters, stated the following: “We

believe that the Spirit will preside over this Chapter. Let us enter this Tent, to listen to Him and to respond to his challenges, as a Community of Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, seeking to incarnate our Charism, as Minority, Hospitality and Fruitfulness... Courage, my Sisters! It is the Spirit, the Lord of life and of history, who widens our gaze to the more extensive horizons and lovingly leads us, by the paths of new creation!”



At the end of the opening message, Sr. Maria da Conceição Galvão Ribeiro informed the Chapter Sisters of her decision to appoint Sr. Maria Isilda Freitas as the President of the XXVII General Chapter.

## **JULY 13 – RETREAT**

### **CELEBRATION OF THE PASSING OVER OF FR. RAIMUNDO DOS ANJOS BEIRÃO**

On the first day of the retreat, we were invited by His Eminence Cardinal Aquilino Bocos to thank for the vocation, the Congregation, the life of the Sisters, the service of the Sisters who have governed and those who collaborated with them, the poor who help us to follow Jesus and the realization of this Chapter.

It was with great joy that we celebrated another anniversary of the Passing over of our Founder, Fr. Raimundo dos Anjos Beirão. With him and through him, we praised and thanked God for the gift that he has been to the Church and to our Congregation. After his example we are called to be *apostles of his mercy*.



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*“Grant us, Lord, a new and grateful heart.”*

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## JULY 14 - RETREAT

The reflection of the second day of the retreat was an invitation to reconcile ourselves with God, with the Congregation and with one another, stressing that “to believe in the Congregation is something more than just having interest towards it; it is to feel deep and passionate love, solicitude and preoccupation, to live with hope and to surrender ourselves for it.” (D. Aquilino Bocos)

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### *“Conversion and reconciliation”*

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John Paul II wrote: So many are the poverties of today! In the light of the parable of the Good Samaritan, we were motivated to reflect on, who is our neighbour or whom are we close to.

