

Biennial Assembly—a Moment in History...

Sister Danat Marie Brysch and the General Administration, Provincial and Vice-Provincial Ministers, Vicars and Councilors responsible for Provincial Chapters gathered for the Biennial Assembly at the Redemptorist Retreat House in Krakow, Poland from September 11 to 17, 2022. Irma Maria Aparecida Vilas-Bôas and her Councilors joined via Zoom from Brazil. Frances Heery, the General Chapter facilitator, was also present for all of the sessions. The theme for the 25th General Chapter (GC) of 2024, *The love of Christ impels us: Conversion, Reconciliation, Mission* was the overarching theme for the atmosphere of the seven-day meetings. Following Morning Prayer, the Eucharistic Liturgy and breakfast the days were filled with sessions, conferences, reports, large and small group discussion, sharing and times of quiet reflection. In her opening address* to the Assembly, Sister Danat Marie noted that *during a time of rapid historical change... we are called.. to wonder where it is all leading and what is our role in it all as Felician Sisters trying to live out God's dream that was passed on to us through Blessed Mary Angela... Part of our answer is in our theme, the love of Christ impels us...* With these opening thoughts Sister Danat encouraged the participants to enter fully into the process of the Biennial Assembly as we listened to the conferences and planned to make the General and Provincial Chapters transformative events in the life of the Provinces and Congregation.

Several priests celebrated the Eucharistic Liturgy throughout the week. In their homilies, they were able to thoughtfully and integrally weave the theme of the Chapter to the various feasts and readings of the day. Several of the Presiders were also presenters to the Assembly. Father Krzysztof Wons, SDS, in his conference on the initial day, spoke on the Chapter theme and stressed that Christ was *the source, the motivation and the response* to a life lived in His love. *We are sent into the world as persons converted and conformed to Christ.* Rev. Łukasz Woźniak, OFM Cap, presented two conferences in addition to his homily at Mass. He addressed the crisis and renewal of contemporary religious life and the discernment needed to seek God's Will for our time. Father warned of being *touched by mediocrity* rather than *striving to have a passion for what we are about.* Rev. Krzysztof Gierat, CMF,* the canonist who has been engaged to support the work of the General Chapter, presented to the Assembly via Zoom. Father Krzysztof has been assisting the Constitutions Ad Hoc Committee since September of 2021. His role has been to give advice regarding the work of updating our Constitutions and to suggest the best ways to present proposed changes to the Chapter delegates so the Chapter work goes as smoothly as possible. Rev. Łukasz Stec, OFM Cap, in his homily* for the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, at the closing of the Assembly, spoke of *conversion, reconciliation and mission* in light of the life of St. Francis and each Felician Sister throughout the Congregation. Sister Elaine Marie Frigo, Vicar General, presented a reflective presentation, *A Living Charism and Congregational Identity* which was extremely powerful. As noted by Sister Elaine, *A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to directly or indirectly benefit the whole Church. Charism is at the heart of a Congregation's identity.*

A good portion of the meeting was devoted to the GC Process. Frances Heery, who will be the GC Facilitator, was introduced to the group and given time to address the Assembly and offer her reflections on the Chapter process using similarities with the synodal process begun by Pope Francis. The members of the GC Planning Committee presented reports from their work on the various GC Subcommittees: Communications, Handbook, Election Process, Theological Reflection, Liturgy and Rituals. Members of the Revisions of the Constitutions Task Force, who were present, provided a report of the work of this committee for the past two years. Towards the end of the Assembly, reports were offered by the General Administration on their areas of responsibility: Acts of the 24th General

Chapter, Community Life, Formation, Ministry, Government, Justice and Peace and Diversity Task Forces, Stewardship and the Generalate.

As always, one of the highlights of the week in Krakow was the visit to the Provincial House with time to spend in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and at the tomb and the relics of Blessed Angela. Felicians, being Felicians, also had much time for joy and laughter at meals and breaks and in the evening recreations—to make new memories, rekindle old friendships and establish new ones.