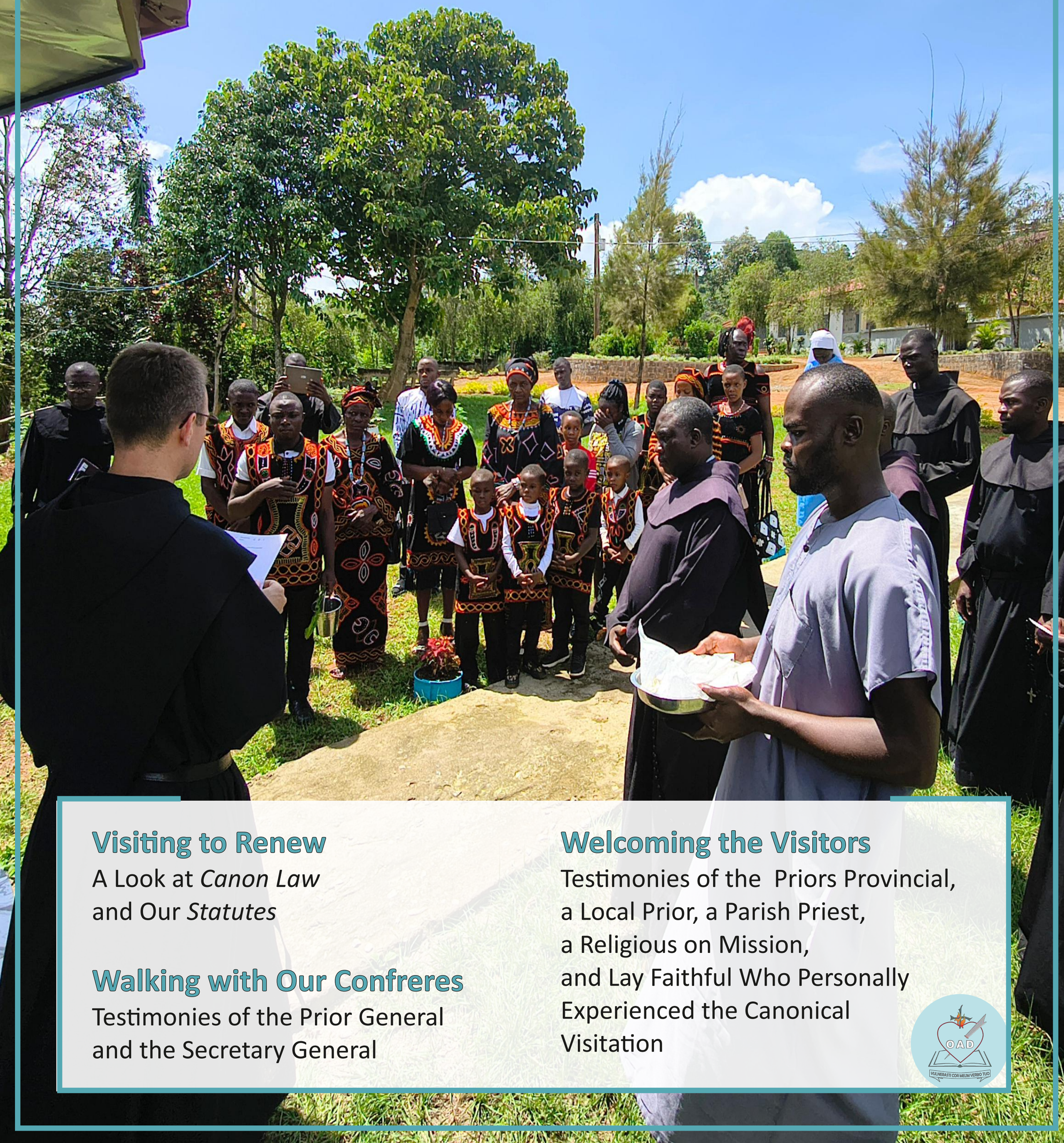
PRESENZA AGOSTINIANA

Digital Edition

September/October 2026 - no 5

CANONICAL VISITATION



Visiting to Renew

A Look at *Canon Law*
and Our *Statutes*

Walking with Our Confreres

Testimonies of the Prior General
and the Secretary General

Welcoming the Visitors

Testimonies of the Priors Provincial,
a Local Prior, a Parish Priest,
a Religious on Mission,
and Lay Faithful Who Personally
Experienced the Canonical
Visitation

Presenza Agostiniana

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The Prior General during the Canonical Visitation to the Saint Joseph Community in Bafut, Cameroon

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Editorial

Visiting to grow together: a journey of listening, fraternity, and renewal

Dear Readers,

The Canonical Visitation represents a significant moment in the life of a religious Order, as expressed in the words taken from our *Ritual*: *"Let us welcome the Lord, who comes to visit us, to renew our life."*

These words express the deepest meaning of the Canonical Visitation of the Prior General, accompanied by the Secretary General: to recognize in the fraternal encounter and in the service of authority an opportunity for spiritual growth and communion.

In this issue of *Presenza Agostiniana*, we wanted to explore the experience of the recent Canonical Visitations to our Religious Communities in Italy, Cameroon, Brazil, and Paraguay.

The articles offer a journey through the different perspectives of those involved. We begin with the institutional and spiritual meaning of the Canonical Visitation, followed by the reflections of the Prior General, called to accompany and discern, and of the Secretary General, who shares the experience through meetings, evaluations, and fraternal moments.

Attention then turns to the Prior Provincial who receives the Visitation and to the Local Prior who welcomes the Superiors into a particular Community. Finally, through the testimonies of a Parish Priest and a missionary, the ecclesial and missionary dimension of the Visitation emerges, reaching also the parish Communities and lays.

This issue aims to be not only a record of the Visitations carried out, but also an invitation to preserve their fruits. The recommendations and provisions received acquire their true meaning when they become a daily commitment and an opportunity for renewal.

Enjoy your reading!



Visiting to Renew

The Canonical Visitation in the Life of the Order

Fr. Airton Mainardi, oad



In the life of a Religious Institute, there are moments when it is necessary to stop, look carefully at the journey made, and reflect on fidelity to one's vocation.

The Canonical Visitation is one of these moments. Provided for by the *Code of Canon Law* and our *Statutes*, it constitutes a true act of governance. However, reducing it to an examination of the observance of rules would mean failing to understand its full nature.

Our ***Constitutions*** clearly indicate its purpose: **to encourage the confreres in regular observance and apostolic activity according to the directives of the Church**.

The Visitator is called to know the concrete situation of each Community, listen to the religious, encourage what is good and, when necessary, correct with charity.

The Visitation thus becomes a special opportunity to examine the **present**, preserve what has been built in the **past**, and guide the journey towards the **future**.

1. A Fraternal Visitation, Not an Inspection

The very word "visitation" helps us understand its spirit. The Superior does not come simply to inspect a religious house, check its documents, or identify possible irregularities. He enters the life of a Community to know it more closely.

Naturally, there is also a dimension of examination. A religious Community lives according to the *Rule*, the *Constitutions*, the *Directory*, and the provisions legitimately issued by the Superiors. It administers goods, preserves documents, celebrates the liturgy, and carries out apostolic activities. All this requires responsibility and must be subject to examination.

But behind the structures there are **people**. Behind the minutes of a Local Chapter there is the discernment of a Community; behind an administrative *Register* there is responsibility in the use of goods; behind the common spaces there is a particular way of living fraternity; behind a Parish or another apos-

tolic work there are people to whom the religious are sent.

For this reason, the *Constitutions* ask the Visitator to be "**prudent and calm**" in evaluating the situation of the different Houses and to show "*great sensitivity towards everyone, comforting, encouraging them to do good, and correcting with great charity*" (Const. 213).

These expressions clearly define how authority should be exercised during the Visitation: knowing before judging, **listening before deciding**, encouraging what is positive, and intervening when something needs to be corrected. The Visitation, therefore, does not place supervision and fraternity in opposition to each other.

The seriousness of the examination and fraternal charity must go together. This understanding does not come only from the tradition of the Order. It finds its foundation in the universal law of the Church: the *Code of Canon Law*.

2. The Canonical Visitation in the Law of the Church

Canon 628, §1 of the *Code of Canon Law* establishes that Superiors, to whom proper law entrusts this responsibility, must visit the Houses and Religious entrusted to them at the established times and according to specific norms. The Canonical Visitation is not an occasional choice of the Superior, but a specific duty connected with his **service of governance**.

Particularly significant is §3 of the same canon, which considers the Visitation from the **perspective of the religious**. Members are called to behave with trust towards the Visitator and, when questioned, to answer truthfully and with charity. No one may prevent them from fulfilling this duty or otherwise obstruct the purpose of the Visitation.

Three fundamental aspects thus emerge: trust, truth, and charity. It is not enough for the Visitator to have access to places or documents. To know a Community, he must be able to listen freely to those who belong to it. The religious, for their part, are called to cooperate with sincerity and responsibility.

In other words, the Canonical Visitation within a religious Order is a clear expression of the Church's concern that religious life and apostolic activity be lived in communion with all the confreres and with the Church.

The *Code of Canon Law* therefore establishes the fundamental framework. It is then the responsibility of the Order's proper law to determine the times, procedures, responsibilities, and practical conduct of the Visitation.



Community of Rome - Italy

3. The Canonical Visitation in the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*

In our *Statutes*, the Canonical Visitation is included in Part III, dedicated to the Government of the Order, within the section concerning the Communities. The *Constitutions* (the major code) and the *Directory* (the minor code), however, address the subject from two complementary perspectives.

The ***Constitutions*** present its spirit and purposes. No. 212 states: *"The main purpose of the Visitation is to encourage the confreres in regular observance and apostolic activity according to the directives of the Church."*

The following number, 213, directs attention to the person of the Visitator. He is asked to show prudence and calmness in evaluating different situations, together with sensitivity towards the confreres. Three verbs summarize his service: to comfort, to encourage, and to correct. Even correction must be carried out *"with great charity."*

The ***Directory*** translates these principles into much more concrete guidelines.

At the beginning of his term of office, the Prior General must carry out the Ordinary Visitation to all the Houses of the Order, including the Provincial Seats. Similarly, the Priors Provincial must do so within their own jurisdictions (Dir. 173). The Visitation must also be announced sufficiently in advance so that it can be properly prepared (Dir. 174).

The Religious are asked to show full availability and cooperation, acting *"with a sense of responsibility"* and in a fraternal spirit (Dir. 176). They are not simply recipients of the Visitation: they are active participants in it.

No. 177 then describes in concrete terms the work of the Visitator, with the cooperation of the Secretary General. He meets each Religious individually and listens to him *"with attention and kindness;"* he examines the tabernacle, the dignity and cleanliness of sacred places, and the liturgical vestments; he visits the religious house, the archives, and the library; and he gives particular attention to the *Registers* (Local Chapters, Religious Professions, Masses, Necrologies, Administration, and other Canonical Visitations).

But his attention does not stop at the Religious House. The *Directory* provides for meetings with the Secular Fraternities and Augustinian associations, and asks the Visitator to become familiar with the other pastoral realities in which the Community is involved: Parishes, Lay Groups, Schools, and other Works.

People, places, documents, liturgy, and apostolate therefore form a single picture. It is the real life of the House that is being visited.

4. Announcing and Preparing the Visitation

Precisely because the Visitation concerns the entire life of the Community, it cannot be improvised. In preparation for the recent Canonical Visits, the Prior General issued the respective ***Letters of Announcement*** well in advance:

- *Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio (Italy and Cameroon);*
- *Província Santa Rita de Cássia (Brazil and Paraguay);*
- *Gesù e Maria Community, in Roma, under the General Curia.*

In addition to the normative aspects, each *Letter of Announcement* provided **practical guidelines** for preparing the Visitation. Organizing documents and *Registers* was necessary, but above all, it was important to prepare to look together at one's own life.

What steps have been taken? What difficulties remain? How are prayer, common life, and the apostolate being lived? Which aspects require greater attention? What perspectives are opening up for the future?

Good preparation allows the Visitation to become a moment of discernment and not simply a series of examinations.

5. Listening to the Community and to Each Religious

Among all the elements provided for by our *Statutes*, one deserves particular attention:

listening. At the beginning of the Visitation, the Prior General met with the assembled Community and then personally with each Religious. The *Letters of Announcement* emphasized this desire to listen to every confrere *"with attention and kindness,"* in a spirit of **communion** and fraternal growth.

This is not merely an organizational detail. It is one of the main ways through which the Visit achieves its purpose.

Structures and documents make it possible to know many objective aspects of the life of a House. However, they cannot fully express how a religious lives his vocation, what challenges he faces, how he experiences fraternal life, what hopes he carries with him, or what problems he considers necessary to bring forward.

For this reason, canon 628, §3 emphasizes trust and freedom in the relationship with the Visitator, while the *Directory* explicitly speaks of listening with attention and kindness.

The **Precept of Obedience**, provided for by the *Ritual* at the opening of the Visitation, must also be understood from this perspective. Every religious is called to cooperate for the good outcome of the Visitation by bringing forward, *"in a spirit of fraternal charity,"* any abuses and disorders contrary to the law of God and of the Church, to the *Rule* and the *Constitutions,* or to the provisions of the Superiors.

The objective is not to encourage accusations or mutual judgments, but to assume together responsibility for the good of the Community. When this atmosphere of trust is truly established, the Visit no longer appears as an external inspection. It becomes a moment in which a Community can speak about itself truthfully and allow itself to be accompanied.

6. The Canonical Visitation in the *Ritual*

It is precisely our ***Ritual*** that offers the deepest summary of the meaning of the Canonical Visitation.

The **Opening Rite** does not begin by speaking about *Registers*, administration, or examinations. After the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Visitator addresses the Community with words that immediately give a spiritual perspective to everything that follows: *"Let us welcome the Lord, who comes to visit us, to renew our life."*

This is a fundamental key to understanding the Visitation. Through the concrete mediation of the Visitator, the Community is invited to recognize a deeper visit: that of the Lord, who calls to conversion and renewal.

The choice of the passage from the *Gospel according to Matthew* (18:15-20) is also not accidental, with its reference to fraternal



Community of Toledo - Brazil



Community of Bafut - Cameroon

correction, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ wherever brothers are gathered in His name. During the Prayer of the Faithful, it is also asked that the Visitator may know how to ***"comfort, correct, and enlighten"*** the Community, and that the Visitation may help the religious strengthen their love for the Order, the Province, and their own House.

The same perspective appears even more clearly in the **Concluding Rite**.

Once the work of listening and examination has been completed, the Visitator reads to the Community the dispositions that have been issued. The *Directory* establishes that these must be written and signed in the *Register of Canonical Visitations* and read to the Community (Dir. 177 §6). They do not constitute merely a final record of what has been found. They are given so that they may become a **program for the journey** ahead.

The liturgy expresses this through the *Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians*: *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation"* (2 Cor 5:17).

The concluding prayer asks that the Religious may achieve sincere conversion through prayer, example, and fraternal love; become builders of communion through dialogue and sharing; rediscover the richness of their charism through the thought of Saint Augustine, the *Rule*, the *Constitutions*, and the *Directory*; and commit themselves concretely to the program of the Order and of their own Community.

Here we find the criterion by which, in the end, the fruit of a Canonical Visitation should be evaluated. It is not enough that the Visitation has been properly announced. It is not enough that all the personal meetings have taken place, the spaces have been visited, the *Registers* have been examined, and the provisions have been written. All this is necessary, but it leads to something more.

The Visitation fully achieves its purpose when, after the departure of the Visitator, the **Community continues its journey**: when a correction is accepted, a good practice is strengthened, a difficulty is faced, communion is restored, an apostolic work is reconsidered, or a religious finds renewed enthusiasm in his vocation.

In this sense, to visit means to renew. *Canon Law* gives the Visitation its structure and guarantees its seriousness; the *Constitutions* indicate its spirit; the *Directory* determines its concrete procedures; and the *Ritual* reveals its spiritual meaning.

All of them lead towards the same objective: to help every Community and every confrere live their vocation with greater **fidelity**.

For this reason, the Canonical Visitation should not truly end with the closing of the *Register* or the departure of the Visitator. Its most authentic fruit begins precisely then: in the daily life of a Community that, after having been visited, accepts to allow itself to be renewed.



Walking with the Confreres

The Perspective of the Prior General

Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad



There are journeys that cannot be measured only in kilometers. Their meaning emerges from the time dedicated to a conversation, the willingness to get to know a reality more closely, and the attention given to a story different from one's own.

Visiting Communities can thus become more than a scheduled stop, an opportunity to rediscover the value of presence and the meaning of a **shared journey**. In these pages, I will share some aspects of my experience of the Canonical Visitation to the Communities of the Order in Italy, Cameroon, Brazil, and Paraguay.

1. Setting Out to Meet Others

Every departure brings with it expectations and questions. We may arrive with a precise program and, at the same time, leave room for the unexpected: a longer conversation, an unexpected question, a detail capable of changing our perspective.

Setting out to meet others means not reducing people to an entry on the agenda. It means recognizing that we truly begin to know others when we are also **willing to be surprised**. An encounter does not require us to give up our responsibilities, but to carry them out without assuming that we have already understood everything.

I confess that, initially, the idea of being the **Visitator** worried me. Until then, I had been the one receiving the Visitations of the Priors Provincial and the Prior General; now, instead, it was my turn to carry out this task.

I was reassured by the presence of the Secretary General, Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, who had already accompanied my predecessor, Prior General Fr. Doriano Ceteroni, during the Canonical Visitations of the previous six-year term. Above all, I trusted in the grace of God, who would support us in promoting enriching encounters.

2. Entering the Life of the Communities

A written report helps us understand a situation, but it cannot fully describe the life of a Community. Being present allows us to

become familiar with places and daily routines, and to better understand the context in which the activities and decisions of the confreres take shape.

Among all the Communities visited, the one that left the **deepest impression** on me was **Bafut**, in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, Cameroon. Previously, I had heard accounts and descriptions of the challenges and difficult situations experienced in that English-speaking region of the country, which has been deeply affected by separatist conflicts.

Now I know the reality a little better. Despite the ongoing civil war, the people continue to live their faith and do everything possible to build a peaceful nation that praises God. And the confreres work hard to welcome vocations and nourish the hope of the local Church.

3. Giving Time to Listening

I wish to emphasize the value of the **personal conversation** I had with each religious and also with some aspirants. It was a precious moment of listening and guidance, offering each person the opportunity to open his heart and share with me what he considered appropriate.

The meetings with **lay groups** and **Pastoral Councils** in the Parishes were very enriching. In some Communities, we met with parish groups for an open dialogue, during which we often answered questions or curiosities about the Order or other relevant topics.

We also asked questions, especially what differences lay people noticed in our Communities and Parishes compared with other parish communities, that is, what they perceived as specifically **Augustinian**.

This question encouraged much reflection, not only among the lay people but also among the confreres themselves, especially when the answers revealed an insufficient knowledge of the charism. However, in several Communities, we were pleased to hear that the presence of the Discalced Augustinian friars has a significant impact and that their apostolate succeeds in communicating the spirituality of community life.

The meetings with the **Bishops** were very constructive, both because of the quality of the discussions and the exchange of information concerning the local Church. In my opinion, holding these meetings together with the confreres of the local Communities

Community of Fermo - Italy

was an opportunity for growth and formation. Unfortunately, not all the confreres participated in every case, and some Communities did not arrange a meeting with the Local Ordinary.

4. One Journey, Many Faces

I noticed cultural, ecclesial, and pastoral differences among Italy, Cameroon, Brazil, and Paraguay, but these are small when we consider what unites all the Communities: our charism.

One recurring factor in every place is the **people's thirst** for God. This encourages the confreres to dedicate themselves more fully to common life and prayer, so that they may offer authentic spiritual nourishment to the faithful.

At the same time, I noticed a greater dedication among my confreres to external pastoral activities than to moments of fraternal life, especially in Brazil.

5. Accompanying, Encouraging, and Guiding

Those who have the responsibility of accompanying others are called to combine closeness with clarity, helping to distinguish the different issues, recognizing what requires time, and identifying possible steps forward. With this understanding and following our *Statutes*, I left **written Dispositions** in each Community, including expressions of appreciation for the fruits achieved, concrete indications of steps to be taken for the improvement of community life, and also some corrections where necessary.

These provisions were read during the closing rite of the Visitations. Together with the written guidelines prepared by the Secretary General and read to the Community, each religious Community received a practical summary of how to balance its human and material resources in order to live the charism more fully.

6. Signs of Hope

Among the various positive realities I encountered in the Communities, I would like to highlight two: the vocational work of the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio and the new lay association developing in the Província Santa Rita de Cássia: the Christian Mothers Saint Monica.

The **vocational work** carried out especially in Cameroon offers hope for the future of the historic Communities in Italy and opens the possibility of expanding our presence to other countries on the African continent. In addition to encouraging all the confreres to



Mass at the Parish of Colíder - Brazil



Parish Community of Frosinone - Italy

be more open to welcoming others, this work offers valuable opportunities to face together the challenges of generational differences and interculturality.

The **Community of Christian Mothers Saint Monica**, simple in its activities and organization, is bringing together a significant number of mothers willing to pray, individually and as a community, to encourage the faith of their children and family members. Their maternal presence around the Communities nourishes the hope that, among the children supported by the prayers of all these mothers, some may feel the call to consecrated and priestly life.

Let us pray that the young people who hear the divine call may respond to it with generosity.

7. The Questions That Await Us

Community life remains an ongoing journey: the memory of what has been shared can become a starting point for moving forward. The **Canonical Visitation continues** even after the encounter, through the willingness to return to the issues that emerged, without expecting to resolve them all during the Visitation.

Some questions remain open: *How can we give continuity to listening? How can we keep the relationship alive after the Canonical Visitation? How can we distinguish what is urgent from what requires patient work?*

In most of the Communities visited, I perceived an appreciation for authentic fraternal life, accompanied by the effort to remain faithful to prayer and the desire for a fruitful apostolate.

8. What Remains of the Journey

I feel the duty **to thank** every confrere for giving me the opportunity to meet him. I extend my gratitude to every Community visited for their fraternal welcome, and to all the people close to our Houses for the spiritual and material support they generously offer to our friars.

Perhaps the simplest value of a shared journey lies precisely here: reminding us that getting to know others is not a task that can be considered completed, but a willingness that must continually be renewed. Returning to daily life with a more attentive question can already be a way of continuing the encounter.

I carry in my heart the 23 Communities visited and all the realities connected with them. I pray that the intensity of the encounters, the summary of the final provisions, and the commitment to value the **Sources of our spirituality** may not remain merely a memory. Instead, I hope that they will continue to nourish each person's journey with Jesus towards our Heavenly Homeland.



From House to House

The Perspective of the Secretary General

Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, oad



As Secretary General, I accompanied the Prior General during the Canonical Visitations to the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio, to the Provincia Santa Rita da Cássia and to the Gesù e Maria Community, in Rome, under the Central Authority.

In total, **23 Religious Communities** were visited, each very different in its history, composition, apostolic activities, and ecclesial context. For me, this Visitation was the **second experience** of this kind: I had already accompanied the previous Prior General during the Visitations of the preceding six-year term.

Returning to the same places after several years allowed me not only to meet many confreres again, but also to see concretely how much the life of the Communities can evolve over time.

1. Preparing the Visitation

The Visitation begins long before knocking on the door of a Religious House. The first task was **planning**.

The Communities of the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio (Italy and Cameroon) were visited in different stages from November 2025 to June 2026, with the Visitation to the Gesù e Maria Community, in Rome taking place in March 2026. This was followed by the long journey through the Província Santa Rita de Cássia (Brazil and Paraguay), between June and August 2026.

Behind a calendar filled with names and dates, there is a very practical dimension: travel, connections, suitcases, and many kilometers. Cars, trains, airplanes, and buses became an integral part of the Visitation.

In total, the Canonical Visitatios covered approximately **50,000 kilometers**. The journey included almost 3,600 km of travel in Italy, approximately 16,300 km for the visit to Cameroon, and as many as 30,100 km dedicated to travel in Brazil and Paraguay.

But preparation was not only logistical. Before arriving at each House, we reviewed the written reports from the **previous Canonical Visitation**: that of the Prior General and the one I had prepared as



Secretary General. For Brazil and Paraguay, these were supplemented by the indications from the Visits of the previous Prior Provincial. This was a concrete way to examine the progress made and what still required attention.

2. Entering Daily Life

Returning to the same Communities after several years was a particular experience. Some had changed in their composition; others had faced new religious or pastoral situations; still others had undertaken works, projects, and initiatives.

For this reason, arriving in a Community does not mean presenting ourselves as "inspectors" whose task is simply to check whether everything is in order. It means, first of all, **meeting our confreres**.

The Visitation allows us to enter into the ordinary rhythm of the House: praying together, sharing meals, becoming familiar with the apostolate, listening to the confreres, observing the facilities, and understanding the challenges they experience and live.

3. Not Only *Registers*

An important part of my responsibility during the Visitations concerned the examination of the physical structure of the church, the Religious House, and the other **spaces** where the Community carries out its activities.

Even this moment, apparently more technical, often proved to be very enriching. In most Houses, the confreres personally accompanied us through the different spaces, showing us recently completed restoration work, explaining ongoing projects, and sharing opinions and concerns about what still needed to be done.

Some recurring difficulties also emerged. In several Communities, for example, it was necessary to identify more clearly the **areas reserved** for the Religious Enclosure; in various **archives**, current documentation needed to be better distinguished from

historical documents; some **libraries** required reorganization; and several buildings showed the need for **ordinary maintenance** that could not be postponed.

A very positive aspect was the attention given to the **liturgy**. We found care and sensitivity towards the church, the sacristy, and everything necessary for celebrations. In many Parishes, this attention is also supported by the cooperation of lay faithful.

4. Memory Preserved in Documents

Another significant moment was the initial planning meeting, with the presentation and discussion of the ***Vademecum*** for the Organization of Archives and the Preparation of Documents, Reports, and *Registers*.

The *Vademecum* originated from a specific indication of the 80th General Chapter (2023), which had requested better preparation of the confreres, beginning already in initial formation, in drafting documents and maintaining the *Registers* of daily life. It had also asked the General Curia to provide practical guidelines for the organization and preservation of local, provincial, and general Archives. From this request came a tool that I wanted to be essentially **practical**. Published *ad experimentum* in August 2025, the *Vademecum* covers four main areas:

1. Organization of Archives;
2. Structure and protocol of documents;
3. Preparation of reports intended for Councils and Ordinary Definitories;
4. *Registers* of the local Community, with particular reference to Local Chapters, Masses, and Administration.

During the Visitation, each confrere received a printed copy, and reading it together in the Communities made it possible to clarify doubts and gather observations.

Establishing **common criteria** does not mean eliminating the differences between Communities, but helping us to better preserve and organize the history that belongs to the entire Order.

5. Evaluation and Continuity

Precisely to ensure continuity in the work carried out, during this Visit we also main-



tained a practice begun in the previous six-year term: for each Community, as Secretary General, I prepared a **written and protocolled report**. In fact, a document allows the Community to return to the observations received and to evaluate over time what has been accomplished.

A total of **25 written reports** were prepared: 23 concerning the individual Religious Houses and another 2 concerning the Provincial Seats, with attention to the specific responsibilities of the Prior Provincial and the examination of the Archives and the Economo's Office.

The reports followed a common structure organized around **three main areas**: people, places, and *Registers*.

A significant new element was added to this Visit: the report was not only given to the confreres, but also **read and shared** together within the Community. In this way, the recommendations and provisions could be understood in their context, clarified when necessary, and, above all, accepted as a common responsibility.

6. One Order, Many Faces

Visiting Communities in four countries means encountering different ecclesial, social, cultural, and linguistic realities. It would be impossible to evaluate all of them according to the same criteria without considering their contexts.

In **Italy**, there is a need for continuous pastoral updating in response to the new reality of the Church and society. In **Brazil and Paraguay**, the vocational challenge remains particularly important. In the Brazilian context, we were also able to observe a return to forms of traditionalism. In **Cameroon**, on the other hand, some difficulties are closely connected with the precarious condition of structures and available resources.

Regardless of age or country, I noticed certain difficulties in **managing archives**: Mass, Administrative, and Local Chapters *Registers*. This made me understand even more clearly the importance of not considering these matters secondary. They are ordinary aspects, perhaps not very visible, but they are part of the concrete way in which a Community lives its life responsibly.

The Visitation makes precisely this possible: seeing at the same time the diversity of faces and the unity of fundamental needs of our Communities.

7. Setting Out Again... Changed

At the end of this long journey, my first feeling is one of **gratitude to God**. Gratitude for the mission accomplished, for the experience gained, and for all the kilometers traveled, each of which had a face, a name, and a reason.

I am especially grateful for the **openness of mind and heart** encountered in most Communities. Recommendations and Dispositions are not always easy to receive, because they inevitably require us to reconsider habits, correct certain practices, or take on new commitments. Nevertheless, we generally encountered a willingness to engage in dialogue and a desire to improve.

Now perhaps the most important evaluation remains, one that no Visitator can carry out at the moment he leaves a Community: **what will remain of the Visitation?**

The hope is that it will not remain simply a date to be added to the chronicle of the House, nor that the reports delivered will, with the passing of time, become forgotten papers in a folder. A Canonical Visitation truly achieves its purpose when what has been heard, shared, recommended, and established becomes **concrete life**.

After so many journeys, meetings, and examinations, I am convinced that it was not only the Communities that were visited. We Visitators, too, were in some way visited: by the stories of the confreres, by their welcome, by the difficulties encountered, by the generosity seen in so many places, and by the different ways in which our charism continues to come to life.

If all this helps us to grow, both the Visitators and the confreres who were visited, then the kilometers traveled will also have become part of a journey shared together.





On the Other Side of the Visitation

The Experience of the Prior Provincial

Fr. Jan Derek Sayson, oad

1. Expectations Before the Canonical Visitation

The Canonical Visitation to the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio, which began in November 2025 and ended in June 2026, accompanied the life of our Province for several months. It is an event that takes place every six years and, for this very reason, cannot be considered an ordinary occasion.

The **first things** that come to mind are documents, *Registers,* the administrative situation, and juridical matters. This is understandable. The Canonical Visitation also has an institutional dimension and requires each Community to examine its own situation. And so, little by little, we begin to put things in order, to examine and check what, perhaps, in the busy rhythm of daily life, had been somewhat neglected.

But while we were doing this work, I asked myself whether preparing for the Visitation was really only about these things. Because, in reality, when we know that someone is coming to visit us, we do not prepare only the house. In some way, we also prepare ourselves.

Knowing that the Prior General, accompanied by the Secretary General, was coming encouraged us to stop and look more carefully at the reality of our Communities. How are we living together? How are our fraternal relationships? Does our common life truly correspond to what we have chosen to live? How do we care for prayer and community life? How do we carry out our pastoral service? How do we administer the goods entrusted to us? Simple questions, perhaps, but not always easy ones.

Preparing for the Visitation led us, in some way, to move beyond the routine of daily life. There are things that, after living together for years, we risk no longer seeing. They become normal, taken for granted, almost invisible. Preparation gave us the **opportunity to stop and look at them again**.

I cannot say what every confrere was feeling. However, I can say that, overall, the period of expectation was accompanied by a positive attitude. There was certainly an

awareness of responsibility and of the need to examine certain aspects of our life, but there was also a desire to meet the Prior General, to share with him the **concrete reality of our Communities**, our difficulties, and our hopes. And here lies one of the most significant aspects of what we experienced.

A Visitation can easily be perceived as a moment of examination: someone comes to see how we are doing, what we are doing, and whether everything is in order. But if we stop for a moment, we can discover a different perspective. It was not only a matter of preparing something to show the Visitator; it was a matter of preparing ourselves to be encountered.

Allowing ourselves to be visited means allowing our life to be seen with new eyes. I realized that preparing for the Visitation meant, ultimately, preparing to look at ourselves.

2. The Fraternal Meaning of Welcoming

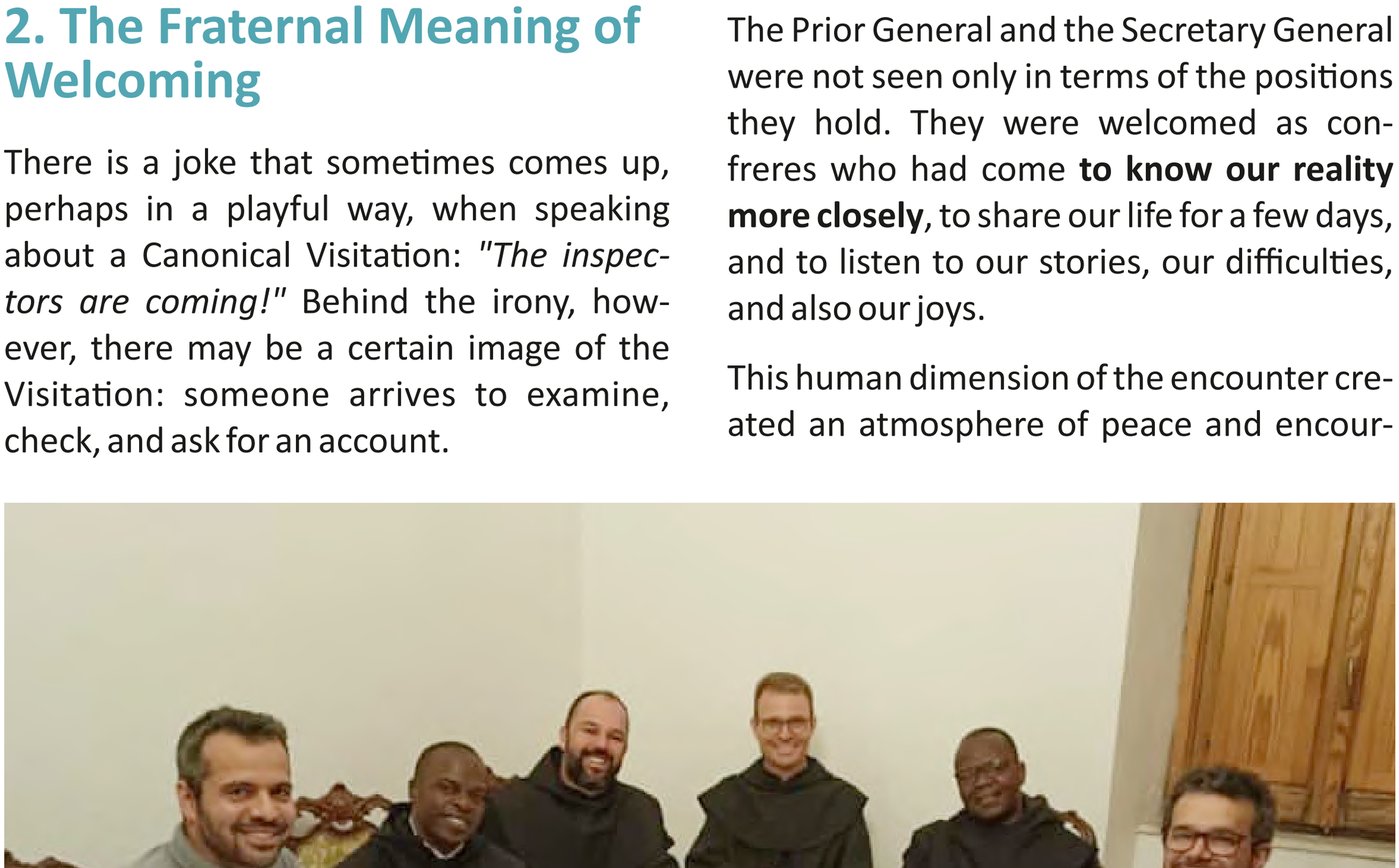
There is a joke that sometimes comes up, perhaps in a playful way, when speaking about a Canonical Visitation: *"The inspectors are coming!"* Behind the irony, however, there may be a certain image of the Visitation: someone arrives to examine, check, and ask for an account.

Certainly, the dimension of examination is part of the Visitation. It is an established and necessary task because it helps every Community and the Province to evaluate their situation. But during these months, I realized that there is something that comes first and that perhaps also gives meaning to the examination: the **encounter between brothers**.

For this reason, rather than speaking about welcoming the Prior General and the Secretary General as a formal occasion, I prefer to remember the atmosphere that developed in our Communities. Their presence was experienced with spontaneity. Beyond the scheduled meetings, the questions, and the matters to be examined, there were simple moments: a conversation, a shared meal, a few words exchanged without hurry, a smile, a personal confidence. It is in these moments that an official visit can lose its distance and become truly fraternal.

The Prior General and the Secretary General were not seen only in terms of the positions they hold. They were welcomed as confreres who had come **to know our reality more closely**, to share our life for a few days, and to listen to our stories, our difficulties, and also our joys.

This human dimension of the encounter created an atmosphere of peace and encour-



Community of Valverde - Italy

aged a more sincere dialogue. When we feel welcomed not only as members of an institution, but as persons and brothers, it becomes easier to speak freely. Even difficult matters can be shared without the fear that every word will immediately become part of an evaluation. And so, almost naturally, the examination took on a different character.

It was no longer simply someone coming to ask, *"How are things going?"* but a brother asking, *"How are you? How are you living? What worries you? What gives you hope?"* It is a subtle but important difference.

This is precisely one of the most beautiful aspects of our experience: being able to encounter in the Prior General and the Secretary General not only the authority they represent, but also **elder brothers**. Brothers who, because of the service entrusted to them, have a broader responsibility, but who nevertheless continue to share with us the same calling and the same desire to live our charism.

Their presence reminded us, in a concrete way, that no Community lives alone. Behind every convent, every Parish, every work, and every commitment, there is a greater fraternity: the Order to which we belong.

3. Personal Dialogue in Each Community

Among the different moments of the Visitation, there is one that I personally consider particularly significant: the personal conversation with the Prior General.

Every confrere had the opportunity to experience this moment with the Prior General. A personal meeting, simple in its form, but capable of touching **important aspects** of our life. Because when we find ourselves before someone who listens, we realize that we do not always need someone to give us immediate answers. Sometimes we simply need to be heard.

In my case, the conversation took place in a rather spontaneous atmosphere and, perhaps for this very reason, helped me to express **more freely** certain aspects of my experience: personal life, community relationships, the responsibilities of service, and, more generally, the situation of the Province.

Speaking about these things means, in some way, stopping for a moment. Daily life constantly takes us from one commitment to another, and we do not always find the time to put into words what we are experiencing. A conversation lived in serenity can therefore become a different kind of space: a space in which to organize our thoughts, reflect on certain experiences, recognize what is helping us, and also what is causing us difficulties.

For me, this is the greatest gift of listening: **helping us to see** what we can no longer see clearly on our own. In the personal conversation, there was not only the possibility of speaking about one’s situation. There was also the possibility of feeling heard in one's own story: when someone listens without hurry, but with respect and attention.



Community of Genoa (Sestri Ponente) - Italy

Even difficulties can be shared; even questions that we have carried within us for a long time can finally find a space. In this sense, the personal conversation had something deeply fraternal for me.

It was not simply a moment in which the Prior General gathered information about the Community or the Province. It was an encounter in which two confreres, each with his own role, faced together the concrete reality of religious life. It is precisely here that we better understand the meaning of the Visitation. The Visitator did not come only to know our situation; he also came to know us.

4. Reflecting on Our Own Life

The presence of the Prior General helped us to reflect again on some fundamental aspects of our life: common life, prayer, the apostolate, formation, and the organization of the Communities.

These are aspects that we know well and that are part of our daily life, but precisely for this reason, we sometimes risk living them automatically.

Common life, for example, is not simply living under the same roof, sharing certain moments of the day, or following a timetable. Above all, it is the concrete way in which we seek to live the fraternity to which we have been called. The Visitation allowed us to ask ourselves whether our Communities are truly places where we meet, listen to one another, support one another, and forgive one another.

Prayer, too, needs to be looked at with new eyes from time to time. The Visitation allowed us to ask ourselves whether prayer truly remains the center towards which our life is directed. We may be very busy, even in apostolic service, and yet run the risk of forgetting the source from which all our activities should arise.

The same applies to the **apostolate**. The Visit gave us the opportunity to ask ourselves not only what we do, but also why we do it. Our activities, our pastoral commitments, and the responsibilities we assume must continually be connected to our identity and to the mission we have received. Not everything we do necessarily expresses what we are called to be.

Then there is the **organization of the Communities**, an aspect that may seem more practical and less spiritual, but which in reality says much about our life. The way we distribute responsibilities, use our time, administer resources, and make decisions also shows the value we give to shared responsibility, fraternity, and service.

In this sense, the Visitation helped us bring together what we often tend to separate: the spiritual and practical dimensions of our life. Our vocation is not lived only in the chapel, nor only in the apostolate. It is lived in the whole of our existence, including daily choices, organization, relationships, and the way we care for one another.

The greatest value of this reflection may have been the opportunity **to interrupt**, at least for a moment, our usual rhythm. When we are immersed in daily life, we risk considering normal what deserves to be questioned, or no longer noticing what we have stopped living.

An outside perspective, when accompanied by fraternity and listening, can help us see things differently. It can confirm us in the good that already exists, but also bring to light what needs to be renewed.

For me, looking together at our life means seeking to recognize, through what we do, who we are becoming. In this sense, the Visit did not simply place us before a mirror. It helped us look into that **mirror** together, as brothers, to recognize more truthfully the face of our Communities and ask ourselves what kind of face we want to continue building.

5. Particularly Significant People, Words, Gestures, or Moments

What has remained most strongly in my memory from the Canonical Visitation, beyond the official meetings, examinations, and various scheduled moments, are certain people and situations. It is difficult to recount them all and, perhaps, it is not even necessary. Some experiences do not need



Community of San Gregorio da Sassola - Italy

much explanation: it is enough to remember them.

First of all, I was struck by the **simplicity** with which the Prior General and the Secretary General became part of the life of the Communities. They did not seek only to know what we do, but shared, as much as possible, who we are. Sitting together at table, stopping to talk, listening to a story, showing interest in a personal situation: these are simple gestures, but precisely for this reason, they are capable of creating closeness.

I was also struck by the **testimonies** of some confreres about how they experienced the Canonical Visitation: simple words that remained in the heart longer than an elaborate speech; questions asked at the right moment, capable of opening new reflections; encouragement that helped restore confidence; and sincere words, spoken with respect, that helped us look with new eyes at situations that, over time, we had simply learned to accept.

This is precisely what struck me most: the Visit became meaningful not so much because of what was said or examined, but because of the way we met and listened to one another.

I believe this is the criterion by which we should reflect on this experience: not asking ourselves only what was done, but what has remained within us. Which words continue to echo? Which encounter did us good? Which question continues to challenge us? Which gesture made us truly feel like brothers?

6. Feeling Part of the Order

There is another awareness that the Visitation brought out with particular strength: **we are not alone**.

In ordinary life, each Community lives its own reality, with its rhythms, responsibilities, difficulties, and activities. Even the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio in Italy and Cameroon, while maintaining its sense of belonging to the Order, can risk focusing mainly on its own concrete situations. This is understandable: daily life leads us to look at what is directly before us. The presence of the Prior General and the Secretary General, however, helped us **to broaden our perspective**.

Through them, we felt more concretely that we belong to a reality that goes beyond the borders of our Province. Behind their presence stood the entire Order: the different

Communities, the other Provinces, and the confreres who live the same vocation in places and situations very different from our own.

For me, one of the most beautiful meanings of a Canonical Visitation is to make visible a sense of **belonging** that we often experience almost invisibly. We know that we belong to the Order of Discalced Augustinians.

We know this because we have chosen it, because we wear the same religious habit, because we share a *Rule*, a charism, and a history. But knowing that we belong to a family is one thing; truly feeling part of it is another. The Visit allowed us to experience precisely this.

In this sense, the presence of the Prior General was not only the presence of the highest authority of the Order. It was the presence of someone who reminded us that our personal and community history is part of a **greater history**. Our joys and difficulties do not belong only to us. They are, in some way, part of the life of the entire religious family.

This also helps us overcome a certain temptation towards isolation. No Community is self-sufficient. No Province can think of walking alone. We need one another, not only when problems arise, but also to share experiences, insights, resources, and hopes.

The Visitation thus became a **reminder of communion**.

Being part of an Order means knowing that there is a history that came before us and that we are called to preserve and pass on. It means receiving something from those who preceded us and, at the same time, feeling responsible for what we will pass on to those who come after us.

In this sense, the Visit helped us look beyond our Province without losing our identity. It reminded us that our Community is not an island, but part of a greater body.

7. Continuing After the Visitation

The Visitators have departed, but what their presence awakened remains entrusted to us. The questions, encouragements, and challenges remain, but above all, there remains the possibility of taking a **new step**.

Perhaps we will not have immediate answers to everything, and it is not necessary to have them. What matters, however, is not to lose those questions that helped us better understand who we are and in which direction we want to continue walking.

The sense of belonging to the Order, rediscovered during these months, cannot end with the departure of the Visitators. If we have experienced being part of a **greater family**, this awareness must be translated into greater communion, a more sincere willingness to share, and a renewed responsibility towards our common journey.

In the end, for me, what remains from the Visitation is not so much a set of guidelines to put into practice, but a renewed perspective on our life. The Visit helped us to stop, listen, look at ourselves, and recognize who we are. Now we are called to continue the journey with what we have received.

The Visitors have departed, but they have left us a **responsibility**: to continue allowing ourselves to be visited by truth, fraternity, and the calling we have received, so that our religious life may always remain a journey open to conversion and renewal.



A Visitation that cheered and renewed us

Testimony of the Prior Provincial

Fr. José Valnir da Silva, oad

As Prior Provincial of the Província Santa Rita de Cássia, I would like to share my testimony about the joy I experienced in following, through the accounts and news I received, the Canonical Visitation of the Prior General, accompanied by the Secretary General.

Approximately 50 days, between June and August 2026, were dedicated to visiting our Communities in Brazil and Paraguay.

The Canonical Visitation aims to evaluate and, at the same time, offer encouragement so that we may continue to be faithful to our Christ-centered orientation and our Augustinian charism. From the accounts I received, I believe I can say that it was also an opportunity for fraternal encounters, sincere dialogue, and renewed hope.

I believe that this atmosphere helped the evaluations to be carried out and the conclusions to be formulated in a spirit of openness to the action of the Holy Spirit.

Equally significant were the meetings with lay people, particularly with the Group of the Christian Mothers Saint Monica, as well as with the benefactors and collaborators of our pastoral activities. These moments show how our mission reaches many people and how beautiful the communion is that unites our Communities with those who walk alongside us.

Special attention should also be given to the visit to the tomb of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù, whose cause for beatification and canonization is underway, and to the tombs of other confreres.

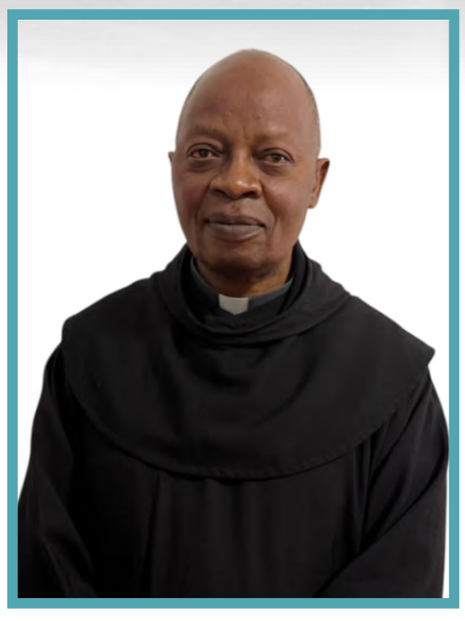
These moments help us remember our history, strengthen our faith in the Resurrection, and give thanks for everything our confreres have accomplished in the service of the Order and the Church.

Through the intercession of Saint Rita of Cascia, patroness of our Province, and Saint Augustine, may we gather abundant fruits from everything that was sown during this Canonical Visitation and continue to walk together with joy, hope, and fidelity to our charism.



Cemetery of Ampére - Brazil





Opening the Doors of the House

The Experience of a Local Prior

Fr. Gregorio Cibwabwa, oad

In the Canonical Visitation, we recognize the paternal care of the confrere Visitator towards the Community being visited. In other words, there is a movement or vital exchange between the Central Government and the various Communities of the Order.

Indeed, the one who has the responsibility of governing the Order in the name of the Church leaves his office and goes directly to the Communities to understand their reality and strengthen the confreres in the faith. A Visit of this kind is always announced through a *Letter of Announcement* and the Communities prepare to welcome the Visitor and those accompanying him.

1. Before the Visitation

Upon receiving the ***Letter of Announcement***, the organizational process begins. After all, preparing for a Visitation of this kind also shows the respect given to the Visitator.

Such preparation requires that the Community (Religious and Parish) be informed and made aware of the importance of the Visitation. At the level of the religious Community, it is necessary to hold a Local Chapter so that everyone may work together for the success of the Visitation. During the Local Chapter, the discussions focus on the following aspects:

Spiritual preparation: The Religious Community turns to the Lord in prayer, asking for the success of the Canonical Visitation.

Logistical organization: Welcoming also means providing food and accommodation for those who come to our House.

Preparation of the House's administrative Registers: Administering also means taking care of the *Registers* and the Archives of the House. It is important to ensure that these are updated so that they present the real situation of the House.

Planning meetings with the various Parish groups: Normally, the different Parish groups operate independently. On this occasion, it is necessary to contact all the group



Parish Community of Collegno - Italy

leaders, bring them together for a meeting, and agree on the program of the Canonical Visitation.

Arranging a courtesy visit with the Local Ordinary: Since we are a Community working within a Diocese, it is appropriate for the Visitator to meet the Bishop. In a large city, it is not always easy to meet the Local Ordinary, so arrangements must be made well in advance. In some cases, this is also an opportunity to personally introduce the religious Community to the Bishop of the Diocese.

2. During the Visitation

Having prepared the list of the various parish groups, the Visitator, during the meeting with the **assembled Community**, has the opportunity to see, listen, and become familiar with the local reality. Participants are given the opportunity to express themselves freely and respectfully, sharing their expectations and concerns before the Visitator.

For the **Local Prior**, the Canonical Visitation is an opportunity to receive the solidarity and encouragement of the Central Authority in his responsibility to guide and animate the religious Community. At the same time, the Local Prior gives an account of his work by presenting the administrative *Registers* and the Archives to the Visitator. After their examination and verification, suggestions and recommendations may be given with a view to improvement.

It is clear that when we are open and cooperative, the Visitator can help us rediscover certain aspects of community life that daily routine may, in some way, make less noticeable. In other words, he helps us **look with new eyes at what we see every day**. In this way, new horizons open before us. The encouragement of the Visitator is fundamental.

The Visitator's very short stay in the Community allows him to offer some suggestions and **dispositions** aimed at improving our life and work together. These provisions are presented during the closing ceremony of the Visitation, a cordial moment in which the members of the Community willingly listen to the Visitator and the Secretary General as they share their experience of the Community. Together, everyone gives thanks to the Lord for the Visitation.

3. After the Visitation

After the departure of the distinguished guests, the Community resumes its journey of daily life and seeks to transform the guidelines received into **concrete decisions** and actions. In any case, we know that every change requires not only goodwill, but also time and determination.

The Prior takes care to convene the Local Chapter to identify priorities and thus begin the process of implementing the Visitor's guidelines. Therefore, while the host Community remains enthusiastic about having welcomed such distinguished guests, we also believe that they themselves have had a beautiful experience and, above all, have discovered the reality of Discalced Augustinian life as lived by the confreres of this Community.





Visitators Encountering Parish Life

Religious and Lay Faithful Together in Mission

Fr. Gustavo Tubiana, oad

Our Community in Rio de Janeiro received the Canonical Visitation of the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, and the Secretary General, Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, from August 5 to 9, 2026, thus concluding the **journey of Visitations** to the Communities of the Província Santa Rita de Cássia (Brazil and Paraguay).

The Visitation began at the Ramos Residence, the seat of the Community, with the opening rite, followed by a dialogue with the Religious. During the following days, personal meetings took place between the confreres and the Prior General, together with the examination of the *Registers* and the updating of personal records.

At both locations, the Visitators met with the Parish Pastoral Councils and the Groups of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, encouraging dialogue and greater closeness to pastoral life. Indeed, meeting confreres and lay faithful is the most significant aspect of the Visitation.

In this context, the special meeting with the faithful of Santo Antônio Parish in the neighborhood of Pavuna, where I serve as Parish Priest, offered an opportunity to reflect on the presence of the Discalced Augustinian charism in the Parish Mission.

1. The Parish Awaiting the Canonical Visitation

The months preceding the Canonical Visitation were very important for the Parish Community. **Spiritual preparation** was carried out to help the faithful understand the meaning of the encounter and welcome the Visitators. The Visitation sought to remind everyone that all Discalced Augustinian Houses are united in communion with one heart and one soul.

Every lay faithful seeks to live the Discalced Augustinian charism that they come to know through **sharing life with the friars**. This experience brings spirituality closer to daily life and strengthens the bonds

between religious and lay faithful. The Visitation was announced during Masses and through the reading of the *Letter* sent by the Prior General.

2. Praying and Celebrating Together

Prayer places the Visitation within the perspective of faith. In the Eucharist and community meetings, religious and lay people recognize that their mission comes from the same Gospel.

This closeness became concrete when the Visitators were able **to share** in the prayer of the people and meet those who support the daily life of the Parish, keeping Christ at the center.

Among the most significant moments of the Visit were the **meeting** with the pastoral groups and the celebration of the Eucharist. The meetings with members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Christian Mothers Saint Monica also provided opportunities for dialogue and closeness to the pastoral life of the communities.

3. Living Our Charism in the Parish

During these meetings, the Visitators asked the lay people a simple and fundamental question: **How does the community perceive the Discalced Augustinian charism?**

One way is through the **fraternal life** of the friars, marked by the specific Discalced Augustinian charism of community life, expressed through understanding, listening, and, above all, prayer. Being together makes spirituality visible and helps religious and lay people live their faith more fully. Despite the particular characteristics of each person, we are all part of the same body, which is the Church.

The Visitators listened to the **answers** given by the lay people, offered their comments, and expressed their joy at the understanding they showed of our charism. Indeed, these were not memorized answers, but reflections arising from the concrete experience of parish life, which accompanies the daily lives of families and pastoral service amid the challenges that each person faces every day. As Parish Priest, I was very happy to see how our charism helps them to live their faith more fully.

4. Presenting What We Do

The Canonical Visitation also allowed us to present concretely the Discalced Augustinian life within our parish reality.

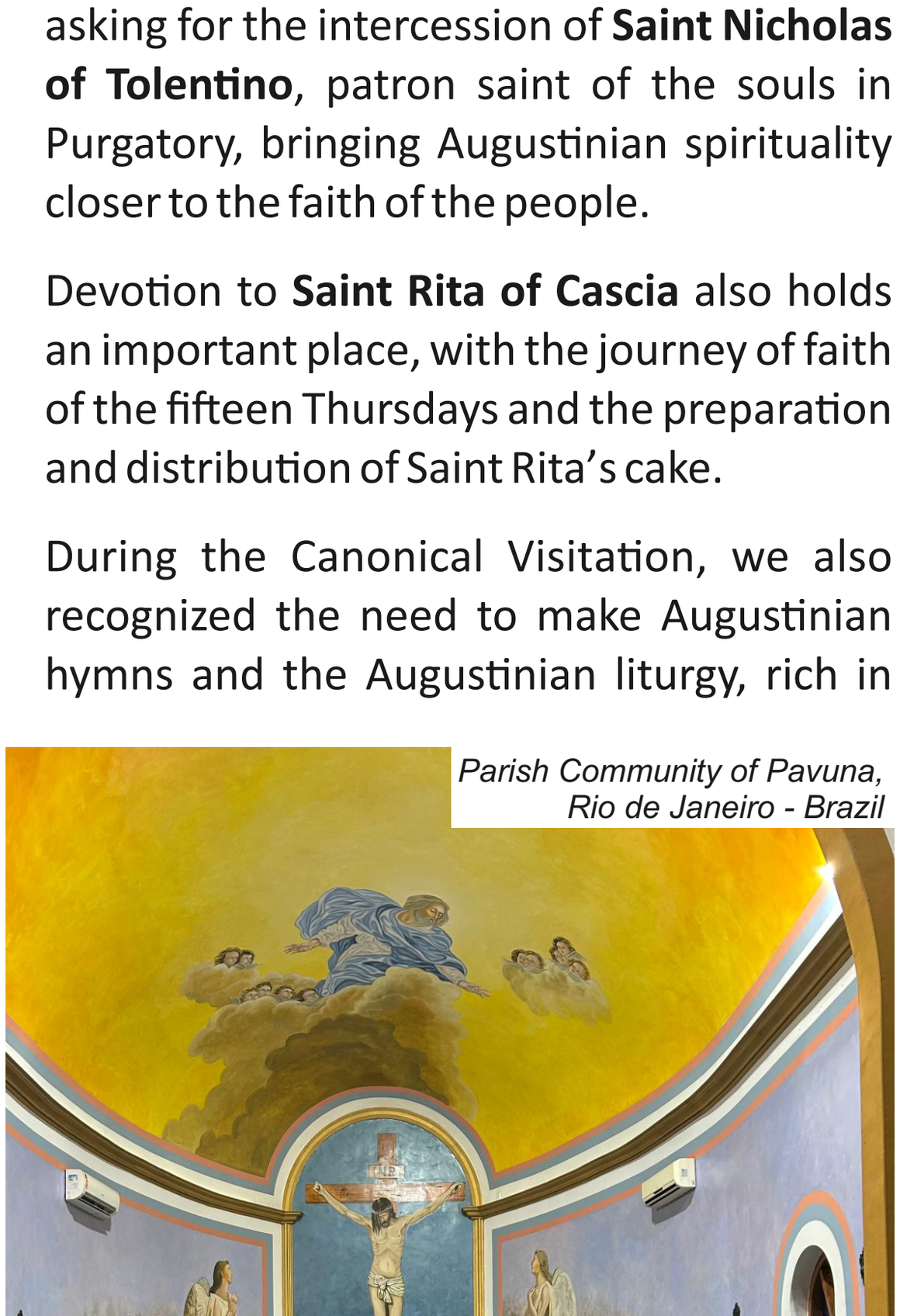
This journey of deepening Augustinian identity takes place through knowledge of and **devotion** to Saint Augustine, Saint Monica, Saint Rita, and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. In this way, the community comes to know this tradition and incorporates it into its own journey of faith.

In the Parish, every Monday the Masses are dedicated to the faithful departed, a pious devotional practice united with prayer asking for the intercession of **Saint Nicholas of Tolentino**, patron saint of the souls in Purgatory, bringing Augustinian spirituality closer to the faith of the people.

Devotion to **Saint Rita of Cascia** also holds an important place, with the journey of faith of the fifteen Thursdays and the preparation and distribution of Saint Rita's cake.

During the Canonical Visitation, we also recognized the need to make Augustinian hymns and the Augustinian liturgy, rich in

Parish Community of Pavuna, Rio de Janeiro - Brazil



signs, better known. Step by step, we continue to grow, having Saint Augustine as the father and teacher of our journey.

5. Listening to Lay Faithful

Listening to the voice of the people is important for understanding the fruits of the mission and the expectations of the community. Among some lay people, there emerged a desire to become part of the **Third Order** of Saint Augustine, living Augustinian spirituality more closely and intensely. This desire expresses the wish to deepen their faith and establish a stronger bond with the religious family.

Among those who **testified** to their love for Saint Augustine was Mrs. Solange de Carvalho Gomes, the Parish Secretary, who emphasized her spiritual growth through participation in the Group of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, showing how this experience nourishes her journey of faith.

Mrs. Regina Célia, who collaborates with the friars in decorating the church and also participates in the same group, highlighted the importance of Discalced Augustinian spirituality in her life. According to her testimony, the benefits of this experience also reach her entire family.

6. Religious and Lay Faithful in the Same Mission

In Pavuna, which is part of the reality of a large **metropolitan city**, the mission faces certain challenges related to distances and social conditions. Despite this, we continue to walk with hope. Indeed, we religious and the lay people share the commitment to proclaim the Gospel and strengthen community life.

On this journey, it is essential to bring **young people** closer to Augustinian spirituality. If we wish to have committed lay people who are formed in this tradition, we must begin with the young, offering them opportunities for participation and formation. Young people are the present of our Community and already contribute to its mission.

7. A Closer Face of the Order

The meeting with the Visitators who came from Rome allowed the faithful to become more familiar with our religious family. In this way, the Order becomes known also through people, stories, and concrete relationships. This closeness can increase interest in Discalced Augustinian spirituality and strengthen communion with its mission.

The fruit of the Visitation will continue in the daily life of the Parish, which was invited by the Prior General to transform its welcome into commitment and to continue deepening, together with the religious, its participation in the life of the Order and the Church.



Community of Rio de Janeiro - Brazil



When the Order Draws Near

The Canonical Visitation in the Mission in Paraguay

Fr. Valdecir Soares, oad



1. Making Our Mission Known

Inspired by Jesus' invitation to the apostles to put out into deep water and cast their nets (Lk 5:4), in **January 2007** the Discalced Augustinian of the Província Santa Rita de Cássia in Brazil, now the Province of Brazil and Paraguay, began the experience of living our charism in Paraguay.

In the same year, they founded the San Ezequiel Moreno Community in the municipality of **Colonia Iguazú**, and in February 2017, the Fr. Antonio Desideri Community in the municipality of **Villa Elisa**, in the Archdiocese of Asunción.

Since their arrival in this territory, the Religious have carried out their activities in a broad and diverse **pastoral field**, characterized by the specific sociocultural features of each place. Colonia Iguazú, located in a border region, is distinguished by its multiethnic, multicultural, and interreligious character, while Villa Elisa, which belongs to the metropolitan area of Asunción, faces the challenges typical of a large city.

Currently, the two Communities mentioned above have six Religious, who are mainly entrusted with the administration of two Parishes (San José Obrero in Colonia Iguazú and Santos Arcángeles in Villa Elisa); one Formation House (San Ezequiel Moreno in Colonia Iguazú); and two Educational Centers (Centro Educativo Católico San Agustín in Colonia Iguazú and Escuela Parroquial Virgen del Rosario in Villa Elisa).

Pastoral activity in the **Parishes** focuses mainly on the administration of facilities, missionary activities, liturgical and sacramental celebrations, and the spiritual accompaniment of the faithful.

Centro Educativo Católico San Agustín, directly entrusted to the responsibility of the Discalced Augustinians, provides education to approximately 258 students, from kindergarten to upper secondary school. All

educational activities are carried out with the cooperation of local professionals and the active participation of parents, both in accompanying their children and in financially supporting the facilities and activities.

Santos Arcángeles Parish, on the other hand, is directly responsible for **Escuela Parroquial Virgen del Rosario**, which welcomes approximately 140 children.

Seminario San Ezequiel Moreno has facilities designed to welcome young people for vocational discernment, spiritual retreats, formation activities, and spirituality meetings.

Over the years, the local Religious Communities have always been able to count on the financial support of the entire Order, particularly some **Communities** of Italy and Brazil.

Through the Order, Centro Educativo Católico San Agustín has also benefited from a special contribution from the **Italian Episcopal Conference** (CEI) for the construction of the entire building that now welcomes upper secondary school students.

2. Communities United with the Order and Its Mission

The fundamental purpose of a **Religious Missionary** is to bring the Gospel and the charism of the Order wherever the Spirit leads him. This process of evangelization requires constant listening to the voice of the Spirit and open dialogue with the Superiors. In this dynamic, the local religious Community is never alone, but always lives in **communion** with the entire body of the Order to which it belongs.

The Major Superiors promote unity in diversity and accompany the Communities through Ordinary Visits, including the Canonical Visitation, and through extraordinary interventions. This year, the Communities in Paraguay had the opportunity to welcome the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, and the Secretary General, Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto, who visited both Communities in July as part of the Canonical Visitation.

3. Meeting, Dialoguing, and Celebrating Together

Since the Canonical Visitation is an event that takes place once every six years at the level of the local Community, adequate preparation is necessary.

This preparation was experienced in an atmosphere of **joy and enthusiasm**, both by the religious Communities and by the communities of the lay faithful, particularly the Augustinian spirituality Groups of Christian Mothers Saint Monica, who pray for the faith of their children.

The period of the Visitation was characterized by prayer, listening, dialogue, the presentation of proposals, and the formulation



Centro Educativo Católico San Agustín in Colónia Yguazú - Paraguay

of guidelines for common life and pastoral activity.

To become more familiar with the mission, the Prior General took part in the various pastoral activities, presiding over liturgical celebrations in the **Parishes** and chapels and meeting pastoral workers, movements, and Augustinian spirituality groups.

These moments were of fundamental importance, allowing the Visitator to gain **direct knowledge** of the different realities and, together with the Communities, evaluate the work carried out and the way in which the Discalced Augustinian charism is lived in their respective contexts.

Meetings with teachers and students were also organized in the **educational centers**. The exchange of experiences and dialogue made it possible to deepen the understanding of the local reality and open new perspectives on the challenges facing the educational sector in terms of facilities, administration, and teaching, with particular attention to the professional future of young people.

4. Being Missionaries within the Order

It is important to emphasize that the Canonical Visitation, carried out by the Prior General, is of fundamental importance both for the local Community and for the entire Order. Through the examination of the **local reality**, where initiatives, proposals, and challenges come together, the value of each Community becomes clearer within a broader vision of the life of the Order. Dialogue and the exchange of experiences enrich the local Communities and renew the life of the entire Order.

The exercise of the office of the Major Superiors, the Prior General and the Prior Provincial, in their relationship with the local religious Communities and the People of God, recalls the theology of Saint Paul, who presents the Church as the **Mystical Body of Christ**: a reality composed of many members, different from one another, who together form one body, of which Christ is the head (1 Cor 12:12-27).

In the same way, the Religious Order, although composed of different realities, forms, together with the General Curia, a single body, finding in the person of the Prior General a guarantor of unity, communion, and service.

Shared work and **fraternal solidarity**, lived through the exercise of collegial government, undoubtedly represent an evangelical sign in a society where growing individualism produces fragmented people and structures, lacking stability and continuity.



Mass at the Hospital in Villa Elisa, Paraguay



Some Pictures

Sharing a Bit of Our Life

Acquaviva Picena – Italy

September 5, 50th Anniversary of the Priestly Ordination of Fr. Mario Genco

In San Lorenzo Martire Church, the Community gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Priestly Ordination of Fr. Mario Genco, who was ordained on September 5, 1976, in Mussomeli, his hometown.



The Thanksgiving Mass was attended by confreres from the General Curia and the Provinces of Madre del Buon Consiglio and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, together with friends, faithful, and people who had shared different stages of his long ministry.

During the celebration, Fr. Mario recalled with gratitude his fifty years of service in the different Communities of the Order, from Sicily to Rome, Marsala, Naples, Genoa, and Frosinone, up to his present assignment in Acquaviva Picena.

In his homily, he thanked the Lord and the Virgin Mary for the gift of his vocation and perseverance, remembering with affection his parents, confreres, and the Communities he had encountered along the way.

Fr. Mario also recalled the teachings of Saint Augustine, emphasizing the responsibility, humility, and spirit of service that must characterize priestly ministry, lived as a gift of oneself to God, the Church, and one's brothers and sisters.

Aparecida – Brazil

September 4–6, 5th National Vocational Congress

The 5th Vocational Congress of Brazil was held at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, in Aparecida (SP), organized by the Episcopal Commission for Ordained Ministries and Consecrated Life of the CNBB (National Conference of Bishops of Brazil).

The gathering brought together hundreds of vocation promoters, consecrated persons, priests, seminarians, and lay people from different regions of the country, around the theme *"Vocational Communities: Encounter, Witness, and Mission."* Fr. Gelson dos Santos Lazarin, Fr. Francisco Luiz Ferreira, and Fr. José Arnaldo Schott participated as representatives of the Discalced Augustinians.

During the Congress, an image of Our Lady of Aparecida was also blessed. The image



will visit Parishes and religious Houses in Brazil and Paraguay, also providing an opportunity to pray for vocations and for the glorification of the Servant of God Fr. Angelo Possidio Carù.

Rome – Italy

September 7, Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors

The meeting was presided over by the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, and attended by Fr. Renan Ilustrisimo, General Director of Formation and Studies; the Priors Provincial Fr. Jan Derek Sayson, Fr. José Valnir da Silva, and Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer; as well as Fr. Airton Mainardi, Prior of Gesù e Maria Community, and Fr. Alex Candido da Silva, Master of the Professed.

During the meeting, several aspects concerning the community and formation life of the College were examined, including the use of the Italian language, observance of the Regulations, deadlines for the various admissions, and some improvements to the facilities.

The new religious Community also presented proposals to improve the formation program and the life of the international Community as a sign of unity within the Order.



Rome – Italy

September 8, Annual Meeting of the Prior General with the Priors Provincial

The fourth annual meeting of the current six-year term between the Prior General and the Priors Provincial was held at the General Curia, as established by the *Programmatic Document of the 80th General Chapter*.

The meeting, presided over by Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, was attended by the Priors Provincial Fr. Jan Derek Sayson, of the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio; Fr. José Valnir da Silva, of the Província Santa Rita de Cássia; and Fr. Luigi Kerschbamer, of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, together with the General Definitors Fr. Renan Ilustrisimo, Fr. Dennis Ruiz, Fr. Airton Mainardi, and Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto.

The meeting lasted the entire day and provided an important opportunity for discussion about the life of the Provinces, with particular attention to formation, the implementation of the *Programmatic Document*, and the strengthening of exchange and cooperation among the Provinces.



San Gregorio da Sassola – Italy

September 7–11, Provincial Annual Reatreat

The Annual Reatreat for confreres from different religious Communities of the Provincia Madre del Buon Consiglio were held at the Santa Maria Nuova Convent.

The Retreat was led by Fr. José Alberto de La Garza, a religious of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, who guided the participants through days dedicated to prayer, silence, listening to the Word of God, and personal reflection. The central theme, *"Fundamental Vocation to Love,"* invited the religious to rediscover the profound meaning of the Christian vocation and the call to consecrated life.

The days of prayer and fraternity provided an important opportunity for spiritual renewal and fraternal communion as the Communities began their activities for the new year.



Aurora – Philippines

September 7–11, Provincial Annual Reatreat (1st Group)

The first group of confreres from the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino gathered at Jade Mountain View, in San José, Aurora, for their Annual Retreat. The days were marked by moments of prayer, meditation, and fraternal sharing, offering the religious a special opportunity for silence and recollection. The Retreat provided an opportunity to deepen their spiritual life, strengthen the bonds of fraternity, and renew their commitment to their vocation and mission in the service of the Order.



Rome – Italy

September 17, Meeting of the Augustinian Families in Preparation for the Jubilee of 2030

The OSA General Curia hosted a meeting attended by members of the General Councils of the Order of Saint Augustine (OSA), the Order of Discalced Augustinians (OAD), the Order of Augustinian Recollects (OAR), and the Augustinians of the Assumption (AA), with the aim of strengthening the religious and pastoral presence in Pavia in preparation for the Augustinian Jubilee of 2030, marking the 1600th anniversary of the death of Saint Augustine.

Our Order was represented by the Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, together with the Postulator General, Fr. Dennis Ruiz. Subsequently, the Prior General appointed Fr. Diones Rafael Paganotto as the representative of the Order on the Commission responsible for coordinating the preparations for the Jubilee of 2030.





Panglao – Philippines

September 14–18, Provincial Annual Reatreat (2nd Group)

The second group of confreres from the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino held their annual retreat at the Transformation Center.

These were days dedicated to prayer, reflection, and fraternal life, offering each religious a precious time to renew his spiritual journey and communion with his confreres for this year.



Toledo – Brazil

September 14–18, Provincial Annual Reatreat (2nd Group)

The Reatreat for the 2nd group of confreres were held at the Santa Mônica Community, under the guidance of Fr. Luís Carlos. Held in an atmosphere of prayer, recollection, and fraternity, the Spiritual Exercises provided a special opportunity for an encounter with God, encouraging spiritual renewal and strengthening the vocational journey of each religious.

During these days, the confreres dedicated themselves to listening to the Word of God, personal and community reflection, and fraternal life, essential elements of consecrated life and for deepening Discalced Augustinian spirituality.

Rome – Italy

September 29, Beginning of the Year at the International College

The new religious Community and the 2026–2027 academic year officially began at the Fra Luigi Chmel International College.

The Prior General, Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, received the Profession of faith and Oath of fidelity of the new Local Prior, Fr. Airton Mainardi, officially entrusting him with the responsibility of leading the Gesù e Maria Community. Also present at the celebration were Fr. Alex Candido da Silva, Master of the Professed, and Fr. Anthony Duong Xuan Tien, who, together with the Prior, form the formation community. The Community also includes temporarily professed religious



and student deacons from different countries, gathered to continue their journey of religious, spiritual, community, and academic formation.

Salgado Filho – Brazil

September 18–26, Novena and Blessing of Families

As part of the celebrations marking the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Parish of Salgado Filho organized a Novena in honor of its patron saint and an intensive missionary program that also involved the municipality of Manfrinópolis.

The celebrations began with a Mass presided over by Fr. César Gonçalves de Souza and included the participation of several Discalced Augustinian friars, among them Fr. Gelson dos Santos Lazarin, Fr. Osmar Antonio Ferreira, Fr. Alexandre Gregorek, Fr. José Arnaldo Schott, Fr. Francisco Luiz Ferreira, Fr. Adélcio Vultuoso, Fr. Vilmar Potrick, and Fr. Valdecir Soares, together with religious sisters, seminarians, and lay faithful.

From September 20 to 25, visits and blessings of homes took place, along with meetings with the sick, catechists, and local communities, a Vocational Rosary inspired by the writings of Saint Augustine, and activities in schools in both municipalities.



Da Nang – Vietnam

October 5–11, Participation in the APAC Missionary Congress

The Missionary Congress of the Asian-Pacific Augustinian Conference, with the theme *"Commissioned to Preach the Gospel in the Digital World,"* brought together representatives of the various Augustinian families.

Our confrere, Fr. Augustine Tran Nhu Huynh, presented the missionary project Đèn Nhỏ Media (Little Light Media). This initiative is dedicated to evangelization through digital media and aims to use new platforms as tools to proclaim the Gospel and bring people closer to Christ, with particular attention to the younger generations.



Rome – Italy

October 12–15, Fr. Annacletus Nzewuihe Participates in the International Sustainability Conference

The International Sustainability Conference was held at the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, organized by Villanova University, an Augustinian university in the United States.

During the Conference, Fr. Annacletus Nzewuihe, Director of the Saint Monica Institute of Theology (SMIT), participated as a speaker and presented his research entitled *"The Response to Laudato Si' Climate Crises: Through Systematically Reoriented Theological Formation Towards Inclusive Transformative Climate Action and Sustainability",* focusing on the relationship between theological formation, the climate crisis, and sustainability in light of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*.



Toledo - Brazil

October 27-28, Meeting of Parish Priests

The Santa Mônica Community hosted the Annual Meeting of Parish Priests from the Parishes of Brazil and Paraguay, two days dedicated to prayer, reflection, and sharing pastoral experiences. During the meeting, Fr. César Gonçalves explored the theme of the Christian Mothers Saint Monica, while Fr. Gelson Lazarin shared his experience at the National Vocational Congress, emphasizing the importance of vocation ministry today. The two days, marked by moments of dialogue, prayer, and celebrations, concluded with Mass and a fraternal lunch.



Toledo - Brazil

October 29-30, Meeting of Priors

The meeting of the Priors of the Communities of the Province was held in the presence of the Prior Provincial. The two days were dedicated to dialogue, sharing, and reflection on community life, especially in light of the recent Canonical Visitation of the Prior General. The discussions were accompanied by community prayer and Eucharistic celebrations, strengthening the spirit of fraternity and service within the Province and the Order.





Message from the Prior General



Visiting and Being Visited

Fr. Nei Márcio Simon, oad

Dear Confreres, Affiliates, and Friends,

at the conclusion of the first stages of the Canonical Visitation to our Communities in Italy, Cameroon, Brazil, and Paraguay, my heart turns to God with gratitude for the countless seeds He has allowed us to sow in the field of our fraternal life. We entrust to Him all that has begun to grow through these encounters, so that it may continue to develop and bear abundant fruit for our family.

Saint Augustine reminds us of the meaning of our life together: *"The main purpose for which you have come together is to live in harmony in the house, having one mind and one heart directed towards God"* (Reg. 3).

To visit also means to allow ourselves to be visited: to open our inner selves to God and rediscover, through encounters with our brothers, the gift of communion.

With the desire to continue our journey, we will keep visiting the Communities. Soon, I will officially announce the Canonical Visitation to the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. To the confreres of the Communities in Asia, who will receive the Visitation during the first half of 2027, and to the affiliated lay people, friends, and collaborators, I extend a fraternal invitation: prepare your hearts through prayer, listening, and sincere openness.

May this time be a journey towards an authentic encounter with yourselves, with the Lord, and with the Discalced Augustinian family. May it be not merely a canonical obligation to fulfill, but a grace to be lived together, renewing our *joy in serving the Most High in a spirit of humility.*


OAD
VULNERASTI COR MEUM VERBO TUO