

1st Local Chapter - Pan American Meeting **“The Lord granted me Brother Francisco ...” (Test 1,1)**

1st moment: initial prayer

Motivation. To discern and live evangelically we need to change (re-order) our way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is a path that begins but does not end. We are always transforming, because we are brothers, minors and itinerants. In a moment of silence, St. Francis asks for the grace of the encounter with God and the brothers. Let us pray together:

⁵⁰Omnipotent, eternal, just and merciful God, give us, miserable, do for yourself what we know you want, and always want what you want, ⁵¹so that, internally **purified**, interiorly **lit and burned** by the fire of the Holy Spirit, we can follow in the footsteps (cf. 1 Pe 2.21) of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵²and by your grace alone come to you, Most High, who, in perfect Trinity and in simple Unity, live and reign and are glorified, Omnipotent God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Invocations

- That the creative Father "purify" our way of thinking, feeling and acting. Let it change, heal, clean, purify and refine everything that does not fit into God's plan. Everything that prevents us from waiting. Purified we ask for the gift of hope.
- That the redeeming and saving Son "illuminate" our way of thinking, feeling and acting. May He illuminate, clarify, inspire, teach and guide we who walk in darkness (ambiguities, hypocrisies, etc.) May He illuminate everything that prevents us from believing (trusting). Enlightened, we ask for the gift of trust (faith).
- That the comforting Holy Spirit "integrate and energize" our way of thinking, feeling and acting. That He ignite, inflame, excite and open our affection, will and desire and that He revive the passion "of and for life". That He unify all our life in love. Unified, we ask for the gift of charity.

2nd moment: Reflection and fraternal dialogue

Motivation. Francis, shortly before his death, dictated his spiritual testament, the text is a memorial of his vocational biography and an exhortation and admonition of the charismatic ideal (cf. Test 34). At the end of his days, he remembers that the penance (conversion), to which God led him, was carried out among the lepers through the "practice of mercy" (Cf. Test 1-3). Above all, "starting to do penance" meant a change of perspective in the vision and approach of life: from being self-centered, he donated himself (reorient). God led Francis and also leads us today: Today, more than ever, we are being led by God. This free and unpredictable initiative of God needs a free and generous attentiveness of man. God is leading us to a place of surprise and novelty. The Testament, in effect, contains the core of the charismatic ideal and Francis's deepest and

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most passionate dream. After remembering all that the Lord "granted" him (cf. Test 1-15), he lists the essential points of the way of life:

“And after the Lord gave me brothers, no one taught me what I should do, but the Highest revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the Holy Gospel. ¹⁵And I had it written simply and simply, and Mr. Pope confirmed it to me. ¹⁶Y those who came to take this life, gave the poor everything they could have (Tob 1,3); and they were happy with a robe, lined inside and out, the cord and the minor cloths.¹⁷And we didn't want to have more. ¹⁸The clergymen said the office like the other clergymen; the laity said the Our Fathers; and very gladly we remained in the churches. ¹⁹And we were illiterate and subjects of all. ²⁰Y I worked with my hands, and I want to work; and I strongly want all the other brothers to work in work that is convenient for decorum. ²¹Those who do not know, who learn, not by the greed of receiving the price of work, but by example and to reject idleness. ²²And when we are not given the price of labor, let us turn to the table of the Lord, asking for alms from door to door. ²³The Lord told me to say hello: The Lord give you peace” (cf. Test 14-23).

After looking at his life from the grateful perspective of faith, in this part of the text, he invites and exhorts the brothers to contemplate and recover the dream and original project (cf. Test 16-23). If we look back upon the path of following Christ, we will discover that many times, concern and fear have been two forces that have prevented us from achieving radical and novelty in our lives and in the Order. If we manage to overcome these two self-destructive forces, we can achieve any dream and ideal of a more joyful and fruitful consecrated life. What "we want" is much more important than what "we don't want." Breaking this circle and putting into practice this new dynamic will help us feel more confident, respected and grounded. If we build our future, we can see and face the challenges therein with greater hope. We are shaping the lines and colors that the Order of Capuchin Friars will have in the near future of the Americas. Dreaming means imagining, which does not mean an illusory or allusive action to fantasy, but it is an action

of proposition and reproduction of a charism: to imagine is to dream and recreate the ideal of life.

Questions on a personal level

- What do I contribute to the charism? What could I continue to contribute? Where and how do I look in the future? (example 10 years).

Order level questions

- Do we want to survive or contribute to the mission of the Church in the Americas?
- How do I dream of the Order of the Capuchin Friars in the Americas in the 21st century? What do we need for this? at the human and charismatic level; at a personal and institutional level.

Send your answers to panamericaofmcap.org.

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3rd moment: final prayer

Motivation. Having the clear objective, knowing where we want to go, is what will determine the options we can make “here and now”, that is what gives coherence to our life and coherence engenders happiness. Knowing where we want to go is essential for the regeneration of the charismatic habitat, but we need to make immediate and good choices, being faithful to our lives and respecting others. This is what fuels our hope. We must rekindle hope. Give us hope before so many prophets of despair. Pray for our future meeting:

- Pan American Meeting Prayer.

**Most High, Omnipotent, and Good Lord,
we praise you for the beautiful presence of the Capuchins in the Americas:
a past of great dreams,
a present of many sacrifices,
and a future full of hope!
Yes, Most High, to You alone be the praise and all glory!**

**Most High, Omnipotent, and Good Lord,
grant us the grace to fan the flame of our charism in the Americas,**

**faithful to the spirit of our beginnings,
open to the changes of our time,
attentive to the needs and the cries of the hearts
that beat on these immense continents,
recasting our form of evangelical life,
reinventing our structures,
and strengthening our presence,
that the charism you have given us
may be always more visible and relevant.**

**Through the hands of Our Lady of Guadalupe,
patroness of the Americas,
bless the Pan-American Capuchin Summit.
Enlighten us with the tenderness of Francis and the vigor of Clare.
Strengthen us through the witness of so many Capuchins
who have given their lives in this land,
that we too may follow in the footprints of your beloved Son.**

Amen!

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