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ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

NEWS

May 22, 2013 • General Curia • Rome

Br. Michael A. Perry, OFM, elected General Minister

ROME – Following a day that was dedicated to prayer and discussion about the future of the Order, the brother electors gathered in Rome elected Vicar General **Michael A. Perry, OFM**, as the General Minister of the Order and 120th Successor of St. Francis of Assisi.

Br. Michael becomes the third American to serve as Vicar of St. Francis. Former General Minister **John Vaughn, OFM**, of the St. Barbara Province held that post for two terms from 1979-1991; and **Valentine Schaff, OFM**, of the St. John the Baptist Province was General Minister who served 1945-46.

The election to replace Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, as General Minister was historic. The process used to elect Br. Michael had never before been used in the election of a General Minister. The former General Minister was appointed by Pope Francis on April 6 to become the Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life creating the vacancy with two years remaining on his term.



*General Minister
Michael A. Perry, OFM*

President of the English Speaking Conference **John Puodziunas, OFM**, offered words of congratulations to Br. Michael on his election, “There was a genuine sense of celebration and joy as we journey forward. In the name of the Conference, Hugh and I extended the blessings and support of our friars to Michael. This evening, a festive meal will be celebrated at *Il Cantico*. May God bless Michael and the Friars of the General Definitorium in the service to the friars of the Order.”

In this first-of-its-kind election, 34 electors gathered in Rome to select the new General Minister this week. Following Article 201.1 of the *General Constitutions* of the Order, the electors included the General Definitorium along with the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the 13 Conferences of the Order. Representing the English Speaking Conference were the Conference President and Vice-President **Hugh McKenna, OFM**. General Definitior **Francis Walter, OFM**, and of course, the new General Minister, are also from ESC Provinces.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1954, Br. Michael entered the Novitiate of the Province of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1977. He served his Province in Theological Formation, Post-Novitiate Formation, International JPIC work and for 10 years he worked in the Missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He served also with the Catholic Relief Services and in the US Conference of Catholic Bishops before being elected Provincial Minister of his Province in 2008 and then a year later, Vicar General of the Order.

His academic curriculum includes a Ph.D. in Religious Anthropology, M.A. in Theology, M.Div in Priestly Formation and a B.A. in History and Philosophy. He made his Solemn Profession of Vows in 1981 and was Ordained to the Priesthood in 1984.

Br. Michael's election creates another vacancy, that of Vicar General. According to Article 208 of our *General Constitutions*, the election of a new Vicar General is carried out by the General Definitorium. That election had not yet been scheduled as of this morning.

ESC President offers congratulations to the new General Minister

ROME – *Below is the text of the words of congratulations from Conference President **John Puodziunas, OFM**, on the election of **Br. Michael Perry, OFM**, as General Minister of the Order:*

It was announced this morning by the President of the College of Electors Vincenzo Brocanelli, OFM, that we are making history in that this is the first time in the history of the Order that this process was used to elect a Minister General.



*ESC President
John Puodziunas,
OFM*

The electors, after a day of prayer and preparation, and morning mass of the Holy Spirit, elected **Michael Perry, OFM as the Minister General**. The friars of the local community were gathered into the chapel by the tolling of the bell. With the taking of the oath, making a profession of faith, and receiving the seal of the Order, Michael officially assumes the role of Minister for the next two years, taking us to the next General Chapter. There was a genuine sense of celebration and joy as we journey forward. In the name of the Conference, Hugh and I extended the blessings and support of our friars to Michael.

The Presidents and Vice-presidents will gather to discuss issues for the future of the Order. This afternoon, the Presidents will continue their work for which they originally had planned to gather. This evening, a festive meal will be celebrated at *Il Cantico*.

May God bless Michael and the Friars of the General Definitorium in the service to the friars of the Order.

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