



Conference of the Ministers General  
Of the First Order Franciscans and the TOR

## LETTER OF CONVOCATION FOR A CHAPTER

*Dear Brothers, may the Lord give you peace!*

In the year 2009, we will celebrate the eighth centenary of our Origins, when our Seraphic Father received from Pope Innocent III, the “form of life” which initiated the journey of the fraternity of his first friars (1209-2009).

Today, celebrating this jubilee year, we are called as friars, to renew our fidelity to the charism and to take up again that spiritual inheritance of our Founder, giving creative and concrete daily response, each in his own way, to the contemporary challenges, with new initiatives, new energy, and open to Christian hope.

Every part of the Franciscan Family has developed their own way of acknowledging this centenary event during these years, with various initiatives intent on developing the figure of Francis and a more profound sense of the Gospel.

Let us now consider how these various ways might converge in listening once again to the voice of Francis together: “...*the Most High Himself revealed to me that I must live a life according the form of the Holy Gospel...and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me*” (FF. . Test 116).

To accomplish this, we, the Ministers General of the First Order and of the TOR

**are convoking  
an International Chapter of Mats,**

to be held in Assisi and Rome from April 15 to 18, 2009, and will be the singular and central event for the 8<sup>th</sup> Centenary year for the Franciscans of the First Order and the TOR.

For this Chapter, we want to experience, in the land of Francis and in communion with the Holy Father, a profound moment of unity and reciprocal embrace (the first day), of witness (the second day), of fasting and penance (the third day), and of appreciation (the fourth day).


We have entrusted the organization of the Chapter to the Conferences of the Ministers Provincial of the Franciscans in Italy, which service, they have happily accepted. We are confident of a harmonious participation of many friars gathered from around the world according to the criteria for participation that have been established.

We, Ministers General, along with the Ministers Provincials of five continents and the Delegates of 300 Franciscan entities, as sons of one father, St. Francis, will represent in theory, the multitude of many generations of friars, who throughout eight centuries, as well as today, desire to give witness to the “grace of our Origins” and appreciation for the gift of the fraternity. Into the hands of the Holy Father we will renew, in the name of all the friars, the religious profession made with the Rule in hand, written and lived by Francis, and given by him to his sons.

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We invite you to live out the experience of the centenary in your fraternities and during the Chapter of Mats, guided by the prophetic words of the Servant of God, John Paul II. “by remembering the past with gratitude, living the present with passion, and opening ourselves to the future with trust” (NMI,1b).

*Rome, Easter, 2008*

  
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