

Address of the Minister General
Friar Carlos Trovarelli, OFM, Conv.
Canterbury Cathedral Morning Prayer
11 September 2024

Peace be to this place and to all of you, my sisters and brothers.

A little over eight hundred years ago, Francis of Assisi, an Italian, wrote a Rule of Life. He and his early followers had a dream. They wanted, in a simple way, to live the “Gospel of Jesus Christ”.

My predecessor, Friar Haymo of Faversham was the fourth Minister General of the Order. In his gentle and deliberate English manner, he would take this dream of an Italian itinerant preacher and transform it into “a way of life” for countless generations of men and women.

While St. Bonaventure is usually credited with this transformation of the Order, scholarship has proven that it was Friar Haymo who made this happen. *Don't tell the Italians!*

In the General Chapter of 1242, Friar Haymo would bring the experience of Franciscan life, lived in England, to come to bear upon the entire Order through the promulgation of constitutions.

At the heart of Haymo's Constitutions, were the twin pillars of *poverty and learning*. Here in England, the early friars directed their communal poverty and learning as a means of reaching pastoral excellence and transformative preaching.

With their dignified poverty, the friars found creative ways to live both simply and sustainability. Something we strive for today, but often fall short of the mark.

Their learning was forever tied to devotion to the person of Jesus. This must be the reason that books were the only thing of value, permitted in the convents of the early Greyfriars.

Franciscan preaching, as it developed here in England, was supported by these pillars of poverty and learning. It was rooted in scripture, sustained in language skills, and nurtured by science.

Echoes of this can be heard today in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* where he speaks of our needing to articulate an integral theology of creation, using science and technology, which are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity.

Like the early Franciscans, we too are called to nurture the creativity that God has placed within each of us, by bringing to the people of today a new energy of evangelization.

Like the early friars here in England, we are called to preach peace as a means of enlivening church and society. We do this by both *living and preaching* the Gospel in a manner that is easily understandable, cheerful and devout, good humored and joyful.

May our visit to this cathedral, and our 800th anniversary pilgrimage, bring to each of us the pardon and peace of Christ...that we may leave this place to carry out his holy and true will.