

THE BEGINNING OF *A NEW JOURNEY*



by Bro FRANCESCO DILEO OFMCap

It is not easy to describe the many different feelings that have arisen in my soul since last 8 February, the day my confreres from the Sant'Angelo and Padre Pio province, elected me as their Provincial Minister for the next three years. With those first feelings of gratitude for the trust placed in me, and also fear because of the great responsibility, now behind me, I have commenced the period of transition from my former tasks to the new, and which require my full attention. In the coming months, with the assistance of the Provincial Councillors, who were elected on the same day, I shall be choosing the friars who will be the new guardians of our friaries, and I will also have to choose my successors, as Rector of the Shrine, and President of «The Voice of Padre Pio» Foundation and, therefore the new director of this journal. During this period of transition, while I consider and weigh up the best ways to answer those needs and visions that came to light during the pre-chapter assembly and the subsequent Chapter at the beginning of

my mandate, I have begun informal visits to the different friaries to share some cordial time, human and spiritual communion to revitalize our pastoral presence with choral prayer to the Lord, so as to obtain from Him the grace to guide the apostolate of the Province according to His plans and His will. In this, I will keep before me continuously the teachings of our Saint Pio of Pietrelcina who, in 1913, referring to the minister of the time, Father Benedetto Nardella, urged: "The good of our mother Province must be his constant aspiration and all his efforts must be directed to this end. Moreover, our own prayers must be offered for this intention, as we all share this obligation" (Letters I, p. 352). And, a few days later, writing directly to the Provincial Minister, he encouraged him: "I am beseeching our most sweet Jesus continually to enable you to do your duty at all times and to grant you everything you need for the re-ordering of our mother Province. Watch out, my dear Father, and don't be stopped by the difficulties with

which your zeal will certainly meet. Jesus will help you, because the tears He sheds constantly over the present pitiful state of our Province are not yet tears of abandonment, but rather of compassion and mercy which will invariably achieve their purpose, as long as human co-operation is not lacking" (Letters I, p.353). Hence, it is with these aspirations that I intend to begin the new journey that the Lord, through my confreres, has placed before me, and with the intention to put "the good of our mother Province" in first place, and not be discouraged before "difficulties," "vexations" and "hardship," and trusting in the support of the "merciful Jesus." And for this, I hope that your prayers will be added to mine, knowing that "we all share this obligation," so that the Holy Spirit may enlighten me and the Provincial Councillors with His grace, inspiring us to freely give that "human co-operation" necessary to make God's "mercy" triumph. ♥

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