

June 14, 2016



**NEWS 2016** - A new Custos of the Holy Land, Franciscan friar, Br. Francesco Patton, made his solemn entry into Jerusalem. The handover was made at a ceremony which took place at Saint Savior's Monastery.

The procession moved to St. Savior's Monastery to the sound of *Lauda Jerusalem Dominum* while the bells at St. Savior's rang in full force. At the head of the procession were *kawas*

in solemn garb belonging to all of the churches. They were followed by the Franciscan friars, two by two, and by the Custos, who himself was surrounded by his predecessor, Br. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Vicar General, Br. Julio Bunader, and the Custody's Visitor, Br. Jakab Várnai. Behind them, the apostolic delegate to Jerusalem for Palestine, the Apostolic Nuncio to Israel, Mons. Giuseppe Lazzarotto, representatives of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the heads of the churches, the general counsel present in Jerusalem, civil authorities and the crowd also followed the procession.

At the bottom of the nave of the church, Br. Stéphane Milovitch, the guardian of St. Savior's Monastery, was waiting for the Custos. He handed him the holy water and the cross for him to embrace and finally the incense.

Br. Jakab then thanked Fr. Pierbattista for all of the work he has done in recent years and then read the official nomination decree in Latin and English. The new Custos recited the Creed and was sworn in by pronouncing the last words with his right hand on the Gospels. Br. Jakab then gave him the seal of the Custody and Francesco Patton officially became Custos. After singing a hymn to St. Francis, the Custos spoke.

He first spoke in English to thank each person for their presence and like another Francesco, he asked for everyone's prayers. In Italian, the official language of the Custody, he spoke directly to his brothers. "I received this request (to accept the office) as a new call and I answered as I did on the day of my first profession. I feel like a novice (...) but it the Lord is our Custos. (...) And I ask you to welcome me as well as a new brother." Words of humility that were indeed Franciscan.

Then the many Franciscans present, representing all of the monasteries in Israel, Palestine and Jerusalem, came to embrace him as a sign of welcome and to show him their obedience.

The Custody of the Holy Land has a new Custos. He has come from far away but he has found a new brotherhood to love and a people to serve, with steps that follow those of Jesus Christ more closely than ever.

Source: ofm.org, June 06, 2016