



The Franciscan friars and volunteers from Voghera in front of the friary wing to be renovated.

OUR LADY OF GRACES HOUSE VOGHERA

A temporary shelter offering an emergency refuge
for our brothers and sisters in difficulty

GOAL:

Br. Christopher and the Franciscan friars of the Shrine of Our Lady of Graces in Voghera (Italy) need help in renovating an old wing of the Franciscan Friary, which has been empty for the past 60 years. Their dream is to transform it into short-term accommodation for poor and at-risk families and individuals who are facing a difficult time.

REVISADO Y APROBADA POR:

Fr. Michael Anthony Perry OFM

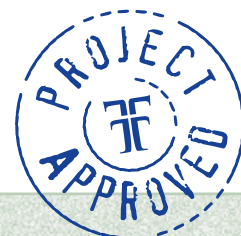
Br. Michael A. Perry OFM
Minister General OFM

Br. Giovanni Rinaldi OFM

Br. Giovanni Rinaldi OFM
President OFM Fraternitas
Foundation

Fr. Franco Mirri OFM

Br. Franco Mirri OFM
Director OFM Fraternitas
Foundation





*Friary and Shrine of Our Lady of Graces
Province of Saint Anthony of the Friars Minor*

Brother Christopher's
request for help to the Minister
General to build the Our Lady
of Graces House in Voghera

For the attention of
Br. Michael A. Perry,
Minister General
Order of Friars Minor

Dearest Brother Michael,

For centuries, our community of Franciscan friars has been an **important focal point for the faithful and the people of the Voghera area**. It has always offered support to those who knocked on the doors of the Friary.

In recent years, **due to the economic crisis that has hit the weakest and neediest sections of the population, and which the current coronavirus pandemic further exacerbates, the number of poor people asking us for help has gradually increased**. We Franciscan friars seek to do all we can to assist our brothers and sisters in need.



*Preparing food parcels for families
in need*

Together with the local fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order and the many volunteers who give their time to help us serve our neighbour, we are committed to responding to these ever-increasing requests for help by **preparing and distributing food parcels to needy families through the Soup Kitchen, as well as providing clothes, footwear, and medical attention**.



*The wing of the Friary that will
become the new House of Welcome*

A few years ago, a dream was born here: to restore the old wing of the Friary, which started as a house of formation and has been abandoned for almost sixty years now, **to make it a home that can respond to a variety of needs that are very present in our area and which are still unmet today**. In this way, we could continue living out the charism of St. Francis in a practical way in this place — and in this time of material and spiritual poverty.

The House, which will be named after Our Lady of Graces, is designed to welcome those in difficulty: evicted families awaiting permanent accommodation referred to us by Caritas and the Municipality, needy families from far away who are visiting their relatives in the local prison, single-parent families, separated fathers in difficulty, and relatives of patients admitted to the Voghera Hospital or the Pavia Polyclinic, who need to be close to their loved ones but cannot afford to pay for accommodation.

Our dream is to complete the “House” by 2023, when we will celebrate the Centenary of the Coronation of the image of Our Lady of Graces venerated here in our Shrine in Voghera, but we really need help with the renovation work.

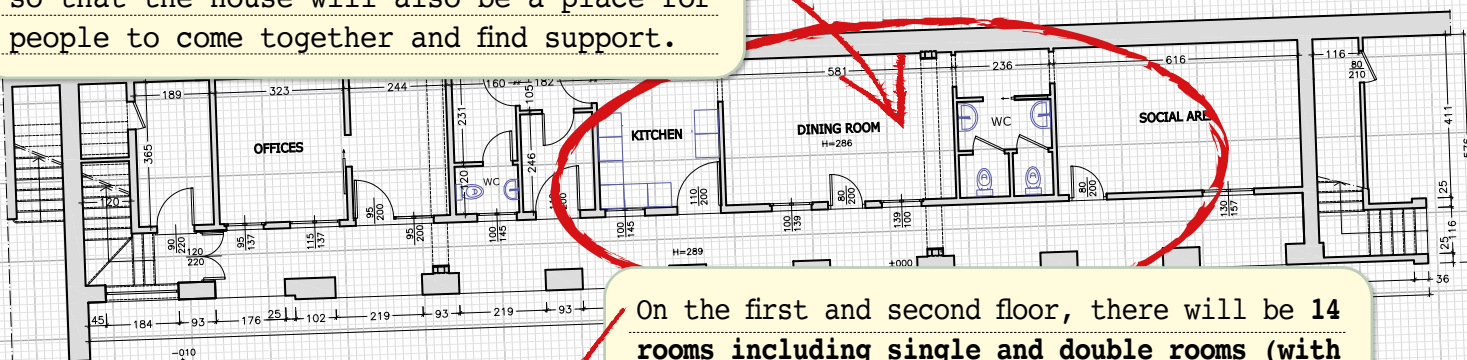
Thank you very much.


Br. Cristoforo Paszkiewicz
Our Lady of Graces Friary



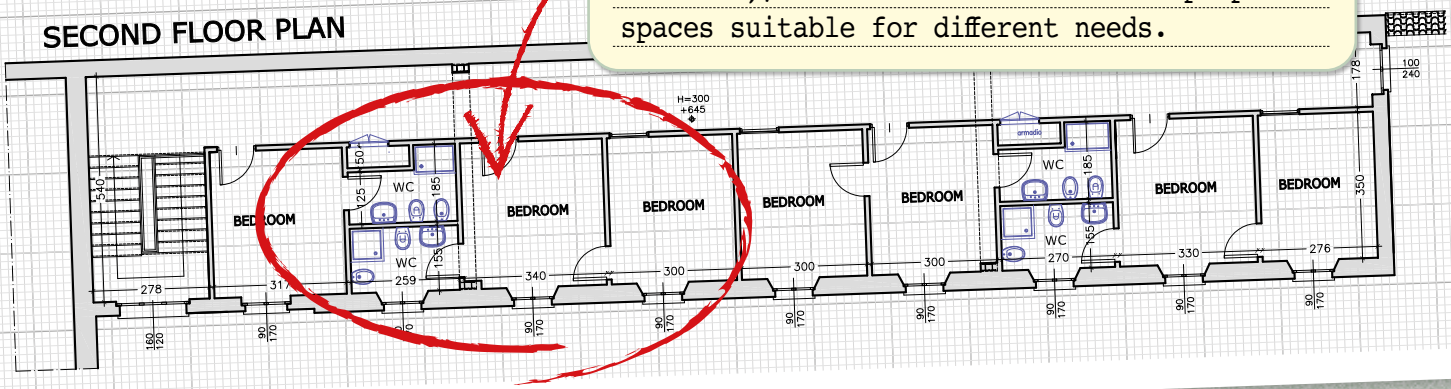
THE OUR LADY OF GRACES HOUSE PROJECT

On the ground floor, there will be a kitchen, a dining room, and a social area, so that the House will also be a place for people to come together and find support.



On the first and second floor, there will be 14 rooms including single and double rooms (with bathroom), which can accommodate 22 people in spaces suitable for different needs.

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



A HOUSE TO WELCOME THOSE IN NEED

More and more people and families are turning to the Franciscan friars because of the economic crisis and growing poverty in Italy because they have no place to stay and cannot afford the cost of accommodation. **In the new Our Lady of Graces House, the Franciscan friars will be able to offer them welcome, listening, and the help they need to overcome difficult times.**



For those who have a family member admitted to hospitals in the area

In Our Lady of Graces House, the relatives of patients admitted to the Voghera Hospital and the Polyclinic of Pavia who come from distant places and who cannot afford the cost of a hotel will be welcomed so that they can stay close to their loved ones.



For evicted families waiting to find a new home

With the economic crisis, more and more poor families cannot afford to pay rent and so they find themselves without a place to live. In Our Lady of Graces House, they will find a welcoming home while waiting for new accommodation.



For separated fathers who can no longer afford a home

In Italy there are many separated fathers who, unable to afford to pay a second rent in addition to the family home or who have lost their job, find themselves alone, without a place to stay and in need of welcome, listening and understanding.



For those who have a father, husband, or son in prison to visit and come from far away

For those who have a father, husband, or son in prison to visit and come from far away. Over the years the Franciscan friars have offered hospitality to needy families who were unable to pay for a hotel when visiting relatives imprisoned in the Voghera prison. During these meetings, like the one with Alessandra's family, the dream of Our Lady of Graces House was born.

It all started five years ago. For the first time in 15 months, Alessandra had to go with her two children and her mother-in-law to visit her husband who was detained in Voghera super-prison. The family had severe financial problems, and great difficulty in paying for the hotel — paying for the train journey from Southern Italy was already a great sacrifice for them. So, they asked for help from the Franciscan friars who immediately provided the family with accommodation in the two rooms of the Friary available for possible emergencies. So, one Tuesday morning a volunteer picked up the family at the station and accompanied them first to the super-prison for the visit, which lasted, as usual, one hour and no longer, and immediately afterwards to the Friary.

As soon as Alessandra arrived, she burst into tears as she did not know how to thank the friars and volunteers, who had prepared something for her, the children and her mother-in-law to eat. Then the family went to rest: they had travelled for 20 hours on seats because they were cheaper than couchettes and their backs were killing them. Immediately after dinner, the family left again. Forty-eight hours divided between 40 hours by train, 60 minutes of visit in jail... and a few hours of refreshment and rest in a place of peace.

*Robert, Voghera
Secular Franciscan Order Fraternity*



**HELP US TO BUILD THIS HOUSE
OF WELCOME AND LOVE: DONATE NOW!**



THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GRACES

Voghera (Italy)

The present Church, in which the image of the Virgin Mary has been venerated for about a century, was built on an earlier **Benedictine structure in 1410** and given the name **"Our Lady of Mercy"**. **It was rebuilt together with the Friary at the end of the C15th by the Dominican Fathers** at the behest of the Order's General Vincenzo Bandello. For two years, it hosted Michele Ghislieri, the future Pope Pius V, canonised in 1712. Closed to the public by Napoleon in 1805, it was used together with the Friary as a military warehouse.

In 1926 the Church returned definitively to the Friars Minor of St. Francis. The following year the Franciscan friars **reconsecrated the altar, dedicating the Church to "Our Lady of Graces"**. In the presence of over 30,000 people, **they transferred the venerated image of Our Lady, crowned in the Cathedral on 27th of May 1923, to the Shrine.**

References to this miraculous image can be found in documents relating to the construction of the original Friary of the Friars Minor (1459-1802), which stood in the current area of the former Voghera hospital. Its title, Our Lady of Graces, is due to the image in a chapel "constructed from time immemorial by the piety of the inhabitants of that region".

The chapel was incorporated into the new Church and **the image of the Virgin, already venerated "for the many heavenly favours bestowed", continued to be the object of veneration for centuries.** While the old Franciscan Friary was destroyed during Napoleonic times, the chapel survived and on March 4th, 1876, **the fresco was detached and kept until it was finally placed in the present Shrine.**

To build Our Lady of Graces House in Voghera and offer a safe place to our brothers and sisters in need WE NEED YOUR HELP

These are the costs:

ROOM	COST PER ROOM	NUMBER ROOMS	TOTAL
Bedroom	\$ 31,000	14	\$ 434,000
Kitchen	\$ 71,000	1	\$ 71,000
Dining Room	\$ 45,000	1	\$ 45,000
Social area	\$ 53,000	1	\$ 53,000
Offices	\$ 44,000	1	\$ 44,000
Bedroom furniture	\$ 1,200	14	\$ 16,800
Kitchen furniture	\$ 10,00	1	\$ 10,000
Dining Room furniture	\$ 4,000	1	\$ 4,000
Social area furniture	\$ 3,500	1	\$ 3,500
Office furniture	\$ 1,700	1	\$ 1,700
TOTAL COST of renovation and furnishing			\$ 682,200



Any donation you make, no matter how small, becomes a practical gesture of love. Thank you!

HOW TO SUPPORT THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS

If you donate by bank transfer, remember to indicate the purpose as well as your name, surname, and address so that you can be thanked and informed about the project.

- by **BANK TRANSFER**
to a bank account in the name of
FONDAZIONE OFM FRATERNITAS ONLUS
BANK: Banca Intesa Sanpaolo
IBAN: **IT15T0306909606100000168958**
BIC-SWIFT: **BCITITMM**
REASON: House of Our Lady of Graces
- **ONLINE** www.ofmfraternitas.org

A SPECIAL DONATION

You can also decide to **help the Franciscan friars in a unique way:**
with a donation of \$ 1,200 you can support the **RENOVATION COSTS OF 1 SQUARE METRE** (structure, installations and furnishings) of the wing of the friary that will house the temporary reception house. Your name will be written forever in the *House of Our Lady of Graces, Voghera.*



FONDAZIONE OFM FRATERNITAS ONLUS

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Via di Santa Maria Mediatrix, 25 - 00165 Roma - Tel: +39 06 92917107
sostenitori@ofmfraternitas.org - www.ofmfraternitas.org

For more information on the activity of the OFM Fraternitas Onlus Foundation as well as on the processing of personal data by the latter, visit the website www.ofmfraternitas.org

OFM FRATERNITAS ONLUS FOUNDATION AND TAX BENEFITS: 1) **For donations from Italy:** the OFM Fraternitas ONLUS Foundation is a non-profit foundation established by public deed that pursues exclusively social solidarity goals, registered in the Register of ONLUS held at the DR LAZIO in accordance with article 4, paragraph 2 of Ministerial Decree no. 266 of 18 July 2003. It is useful to remember, therefore, that charitable donations in favour of the OFM Fraternitas ONLUS Foundation: **For individuals** - are deductible from IRPEF to the extent of 30% of the amounts paid for a total amount not exceeding € 30,000 in each tax period (art. 83, paragraph 1 of Legislative Decree no. 117 of 3 July 2017); - are deductible from the total net income within the limits of 10% of the total income declared. (Article 83, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree no. 117 of 3 July 2017). **For Entities and Companies** - are deductible from total net income up to a maximum of 10% of total declared income. (Article 83, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree no. 117 of 3 July 2017). The scheme cannot be cumulated with other similar tax benefits provided against the same donations. Payments, for the purposes of tax benefits, must be made exclusively using one of the following payment systems: bank, post office, payment systems provided for by Article 23 of Legislative Decree no. 241/1997 (credit cards, bank cheques and circulars). Cash donations are not included in any relief. If you do not know what the most suitable solution for you is, contact your trusted consultant or your CAF. **Don't forget to retain:** - the bank or postal payment receipt; - the bank statement of the bank or company that manages the credit, debit or prepaid card with which you made the gift; - if you paid by bank or bank cheque, a receipt issued by the beneficiary showing all the data and the method of payment used. With the decree of 28 November 2019 "donations in kind in favour of Third Sector entities", the tax benefits described above also apply to donations in kind, i.e. movable and immovable property. For further information, please write an email to fondazione@ofmfraternitas.org 2) **For details of tax benefits from outside Italy, contact** fondazione@ofmfraternitas.org