

## **The Diary of the V European Franciscan Youth Congress**

### **The 3rd day**

Thursday begins very early. At 6 a.m. we can hear murmuring in the kitchen and see volunteers running from one place to another. I meet Michele Cannone from Italy and we both agree that a day should start a little bit later. What a pity, about 7 a.m. or earlier we must leave Trinapolis and go to the west. Each person gets a food package for a day and quickly gets in one of the two buses. Is everybody in? Yes! Ok, let's go then.

Unfortunately, buses did not drive very long because we were stopped by policemen nearby Vilnius for a check of driving documents. We say goodbye to Vilnius once more and now we really leave it. There is silence in the bus. Maybe participants try to compensate short sleeping hours at night. Despite that we say a morning prayer and try to fight closing eyes. After a short sleep we play some games and then the first houses of Siluva appear through the windows.

Now it's time to exercise our sleepy legs. After a jumping session near the buses we went to Siluva's chapel. Brother Algirdas tells a story about manifestation of the Virgin Mary there and after that we pray on our knees. Unfortunately, we don't have time for a long prayer. We accidentally met archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius when going towards the buses. He blessed us with a warm word and sent us to further journey.

After that we go fast and stop nowhere. Our destination is the Holy Mass at the monastery of the Hill of Crosses. It begins by fiery songs of our guests. During the sermon Br. Ivan Matic OFM told that everyone has a vocation to travel to God and to understand together what the Will of God is. He also tells that we are not alone in our searches and Jesus Christ helps us. This picturesque story makes us believe that God never gives any harder cross than that which we could carry.

After the Holy Mass we roll out flags and are ready for procession to The Hill of Crosses where the Cross of Franciscan Youfra will be sanctified. Br. Algirdas and Br. Ivan Matic puts the record on the cross and each participant is given a lavalier made from the same wood as the Cross.

After lunch our flags go back to monastery where we had a discussion about the future of European Youfra. It was led by the president of European Youfra Ana Fruk. At first, she introduces European Youfra Council members and provides some statistics about young people in the world. After that a representative from each country is invited to talk about how their fraternities live today. Later on,

Secular Franciscan Order members introduce themselves and they talk about important documents to Youfra, programs, Franciscan formation and the importance of communication. This discussion ends with a wish that the words will become actions. We must change our thoughts, fraternities and ourselves. Do not be afraid of ourselves and others. Do not close up.

Finally, we thanked the members of the monastery of the Hill of Crosses. We got their blessings and went further on the road. Byelorussians and Ukrainians sang their national and religious songs and while tired volunteers just smiled. Although we are quite late, we reach Kretinga about 11 p.m., where we are greeted by families and other volunteers. With sounds of accordion we dance for some time and say goodbye.

Who will dream about the future of Franciscan Youfra tonight? Will we share?

Inga Nemiega