



GENERAL DEFINITORY OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES
Corso d'Italia, 38
00198 Rome – Italy

SEXENNium 2015-2021 – LETTER N° 10

Rome, 14th September 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Teresian Carmel,

Our usual three-monthly meeting took place from the 7th to the 12th of September at Rome, in the presence of Fr General and all the Definitors. This time the meeting took place immediately after the Extraordinary General Definitory, celebrated at Ariccia (Rome) from the 29th of August to the 6th of September. Taking part there were the Major Superiors of the various Circumscriptions of the Order to whom ample information had been given by means of the various channels of digital communication

In our meeting, we discussed the Extraordinary Definitory to evaluate and review the progress, as well as to take appropriate decisions in the light of its contributions. We are happy to state that it was a fraternal experience, rich and stimulating. We would particularly like to emphasize the atmosphere of familiarity and serenity we breathed in there. The meeting allowed us to grow in knowledge, collaboration and coordination among all those who, at this time, are entrusted with the service of authority at various levels in the Teresian Carmelite family.

Gathering together the principal elements of the Extraordinary Definitory, we became aware that its contents could be put into three large blocks:

– First of all, a glance at the present state of the Teresian Carmel. Fr General presented his report on the state of the Order, which gave both a realistic and demanding analysis, as well as an orientation towards a profound renewal, based on our identity coming from the charism and on the situation of the world and the Church (the complete text of the report has already been distributed, and is also available on the web page of the General House, both in text and video). This presentation was completed by the financial report and a reflection on the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere* and its application to the Discalced Carmelite nuns. Following this, a day was dedicated to the process of rereading the Constitutions, a principal commitment of the Order in this sexennium, to become aware of what has been done until now as well as what has been planned for the immediate future.

– The central and much wider part of the Extraordinary Definitory was devoted to treating some important topics connected to provincial government, by means of conferences prepared by various religious who were competent or endowed with experience in their respective fields, and also by frank discussion between those taking part. Many of them expressed their own positive appreciation of this small course for Provincials. The possibility of publishing a practical guide about the service of the Provincial Superior is being evaluated at the moment. It will include the material presented in the Extraordinary Definitory.

– Finally, a day was consecrated to discussing the increasing fact of religious found outside the territory of their own Circumscription, in many cases with forms of community life that are fragile or non-existent. We sought to discern the causes of this phenomenon and the elements of our charism that are involved in this, in order to make better decisions for the good of the Order. For this, after having listened to and analyzed the contributions of the Extraordinary Definitory, the General Definitory revised and updated the current provisions in force, with the object of fostering care of community life as well as harmonious and structured collaboration between the circumscriptions of the Order. These provisions will be sent shortly to the Provincial Superiors.

The discussions at the Extraordinary Definitory were rich, both in the linguistic groups and in the plenary assemblies, although the abundance of issues addressed probably hindered further deepening of questions fundamental for the life and future of the Order. We invite everyone to continue reflection and to put into practice the conclusions of these days, moved by the desire of progressing, above all, in identification with our charism and in cohesion with the Order. As the final document says, “Let us make our own St Teresa’s invitation ‘to walk with determination’ (L 11:13). We feel committed to continuing the process of renewal that the Church asks of us and to respond with consistency to the call that Jesus addresses to us in the Gospel”.

We also decided that the next Extraordinary Definitory, focused on the process of rereading the Constitutions, will take place in Goa (India) from the 4th to the 11th of February 2019.

After this detailed discussion on the Extraordinary Definitory, following our usual practice, we commented on the Visits, whether pastoral or fraternal, that the Definitors had carried out since the preceding meeting, as well as their participation in some of the Provincial Chapters.

On the 1st of July, Fr Johannes Gorantla met with the Provincials of India at Trivandrum. Besides discussion on interprovincial collaboration, they spoke about the course for Indian Formators which the General Definitory is organizing at Alwaye (Kerala) from the 25th of September to the 7th of October 2017, in which 42 formators of all levels will take part. Fr Johannes then went to the Malabar Province, visiting the 9 houses in Kerala and the house in Bangalore, after having passed through the Vicariate of North Malabar and the Delegation of Ranchi, which belongs to the Malabar Province. Then came the turn of the Provinces of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

From the 3rd to the 6th of July, Łukasz Kansy took part in the Chapter of the Semi-province of Hungary, a tiny reality that is experiencing certain limits and difficulties but which has not given up hope of growth and is opening up to collaboration with other Circumscriptions.

Fr Javier Mena remained at Montevideo from the 19th to the 24th of June. During that week, a meeting was held there for the Pastors of the Cicla Sur. In the meantime he visited the interprovincial novitiate in La Florida, Uruguay, where they have actually 8 novices. Next to the novitiate live the Discalced Carmelite nuns, whom he visited to encourage further their journey of collaboration with the Montevideo Monastery.

From the 25th of June to the 19th of July, he carried out a Pastoral Visit to the General Delegation of Argentina, which is formed at present of 18 solemnly professed friars, 1 simply professed and 3 novices, coming from 4 different countries and distributed in 6 communities. Their pastoral work is diversified and with many possibilities of development. Their activity of a social nature is also notable. In recent years collaboration has grown with the other Circumscriptions of the Cicla Sur, particularly in the area of formation. On the basis of the Visitor's report, the Definitory will send a letter to the Delegation, containing practical resolutions. During his stay in Argentina, Fr Javier was able to visit 9 monasteries of Carmelite nuns and to meet with the Council of the Our Lady of Luján Association. He also had a meeting with the National Council of the Secular Carmel, whom he encouraged to continue building up the fraternity, to begin a journey of renewal, to identify various forms of apostolate, as well as to continue the work of updating the Provincial Statutes and the Formation Ratio.

From the 9th to the 24th of June, Fr Mariano Agruda took part in the Chapter of the Commissariat of Indonesia, at present composed of around 40 solemnly professed friars, 40 simply professed and 10 novices in 8 communities. This is a young circumscription, with great dynamism and vitality with the possibility of many vocations. For this very reason, it is necessary to invest the best resources in the process of discernment and formation of the candidates. Fr Mariano also visited communities of friars, nuns and secular Carmelites in Jakarta, East Timor, the Philippines and Singapore (where he took part in the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the ordination of Fr Joseph Kho, the first Discalced Carmelite friar from Singapore).

Fr Daniel Chowning, for his part, participated in the Congress celebrated in Chicago (USA) on the topic "Pope Francis and Carmel". Later on he visited fraternally the 8 religious from the Avignon-Aquitaine Province who are present in the Trois-Rivières community in Canada, as well as some monasteries of Discalced Carmelite nuns in the region. With the religious he reflected upon, among other topics, the way of adequately organizing the formation of the candidates.

Fr Daniel Ehigie was in Uganda from the 4th to the 27th of July. There he visited the community of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Mityana, made up of 9 religious and with not many vocations. He then carried out a fraternal Visit to the religious of Uganda, belonging to the California-Arizona Province. This is a community of 8 solemnly professed friars (of which four are non-clerical friars), 4 simply professed and 3 novices. The religious carry out some activities of a parish nature, even though their main occupation is formation, which undoubtedly demands privileged attention.

Fr Daniel Ehigie subsequently visited the mission in Zambia, which belongs to the Manjummel Province. At present 3 friars form the Chamilala community. They have mainly a commitment to the parish apostolate, in a vast area and with scarce means of communication; the population is quite poor and needy, whether from the social point of view or the pastoral. The creation of a new community in the region is being studied.

Fr Daniel then made a fraternal visit to the Delegation of the Central African Republic of the Genoa Province. Residing there today are 17 solemnly professed friars (8 from Italy, 8 from Central Africa and 1 from Cameroon) in 5 communities. The political

and social situation in the country is marked by tension and instability. The friars carry out a quite varied apostolate, without neglecting the apostolate of spirituality. There is a need to continue working for the future of the Carmelite presence in the region, with a good vocational promotion and an adequate dedication to formation.

After this report on the visits of the Definitors, we discussed our wish to accompany fraternally and practically the various circumscriptions of the Order, and on the way to improve the service that has been entrusted to us. In this regard, we intend to give a particular follow-up to the guidelines and determinations that the Definitory offers to every Province at the conclusion of Visits. For this reason, we resolved to request that, one year after the conclusion of the General Visit, the Provincial Superior, together with his Council, should present to the Definitory a report on the way in which the aforementioned determinations are being applied.

As always, also this time we received the report from the Bursar General, Fr Attilio Ghisleri, on the present state of the Order's finances. We also discussed with the Procurator General, Fr Jean-Joseph Bergara, some concrete cases of religious who are in irregular situations. In this regard, once again we exhort the Provincials to be solicitous in taking care of the friars who, for whatever reason, have need of vocational discernment, of personal accompaniment or simply to regularize their own situation before the Order and the Church.

We are also occupied with various questions relating to our presence in Israel. First of all, we renewed the appointment of Br Fausto Spinelli as Bursar of the Delegation for three years. Br Fausto was received by the Definitory precisely in these days: accompanied by a team of architects, he presented the present status of the Wadi-es-Siah project and our property in the area of Kikar Paris in Haifa, which we hope can advance rapidly despite their complexity and the always arduous negotiations with the authorities of the country. We have also confirmed and signed the agreement with the Semi-Province of Lebanon, which has accepted to take on the Latin Parish and school in Haifa, which is entrusted to the Order.

The Definitory analyzed in detail several concrete questions on the life of the Order and, among other things, made the following decisions:

- it appointed P. Roger Tshimanga Delegate of the General Delegation of the Congo for the new triennium.

- it gave consent to the request of the Semi-Province of Lebanon to transfer the Novitiate in Hazmieh to the formation house in Maaysrah, in a provisional manner for this triennium and with the hope that, as soon as possible, conditions are created so that every stage of formation can be held in its own place.

- At the request of the Avignon-Aquitaine Province, the Definitory gave consent that the necessary steps be taken for the foundation of a new community of friars in the city of Lyon.

- At the request of the Paris Province, the Definitory gave consent – with regret – to the suppression of the Lille community.

– At the request of the Province of the Philippines, the Definitory gave consent that the foundation (and construction) of a new monastery at Malaybalay City (Philippines) be begun, with the prospect of becoming the future place of the novitiate.

– It approved the new version of the Statutes of the Secular Carmel of the Krakow Province.

– It gave consent that the Kenya Delegation, of the Washington Province, take on the stable pastoral care of “St Francis” parish in Kiptere (Kenya).

– It gave consent that the General Delegation of Taiwan-Singapore begin the foundation of a new monastery at Seremban (Kuala Lumpur archdiocese, West Malaysia) in a house made available by the diocese, which will be destined for the formation of postulants.

– It gave consent for the translation into Norwegian of the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite nuns.

– At the request of the Anglo-Irish Province, the Definitory gave consent to the sale of the “Tabor” spirituality centre at Preston (England).

– It gave consent to the agreement of collaboration between the Provinces of Lombardy and Central Italy, who will share the novitiate at Cassano Valcuvia (Varese) and the student house at Arcetri (Florence).

– It gave consent to the request presented by the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Garagoa, (Colombia), to begin the Cause for beatification of Mother Mercedes of Saint Therese, the foundress and prioress of the monastery, who died in the odor of sanctity in 2012.

At the end of the Definitory meeting, we remembered before the Lord all the Brothers and Sisters of the Teresian Carmelite family. We intend to continue walking together with determination on the ways of the Gospel, with the example and guidance of Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross. We send this letter on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a feast that takes on particular importance in Carmelite tradition and is already quoted in the Rule of St Albert. May the Lord, who on the Cross gave his life for us, help and accompany us in our commitment to live as he did, at the service of others.

Fr Saverio Cannistrà, Generale

Fr Agustí Borrell

Fr Łukasz Kansy

Fr Johannes Gorantla

Fr Daniel Chowning

Fr Francisco Javier Mena

Fr Mariano Agruda III

Fr Daniel Ehigie