



CASA GENERALIZIA, CARMELITANI SCALZI
Corso d'Italia, 38
00198 Roma – Italia

DEFINITORY LETTER (23)

+ December 28, 2014

Very dear brothers and sisters in Carmel:

PEACE.

We are writing to you on this Holy Family Sunday with the wish that all the Christmas festivities will be for you happy and tranquil in the presence of the Lord who came to save us. As a Teresian family we place you in the hands of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to grow in being brothers and sisters capable of sharing the life and experience of God for mutual enrichment.

The recent General Definitory meeting took place from the 16th to 21st of December. Beforehand on the 15th, we met with the O.Carm General Council, as we habitually do each six months. In this meeting we decided that the Generals of both Orders would write a joint letter for the year of Consecrated Life. At the same time we shared the results of the campaign to gather funds for the restoration of Wadi-es-Siah. We continue receiving donations and, with regards to the Discalced Carmel, the response continues to be positive, above all from the nuns and some of the congregations of Sisters, while there are also donations from the friars.

Fr Emilio Martínez informed us about what was happening in the centenary and both Generals gave us a resume of the matters dealt with in the last meeting of the USG (Union of Superiors General). We ended the meeting with a report on the process of drawing up the O.Carm Constitutions and a fraternal meal in our General House.

As we said before, we began the actual work on 16th and Fr Saverio gave us a report on the commission which is preparing the General Chapter. That meeting was in Rome from 17th to 22nd of November. The commission decided not to prepare an *instrumentum laboris* before the Chapter, but to present to the Chapter a document which could be studied in the hall by all the members of the Chapter. Only then the fruit of the Chapter's work would be sent as work material for the communities to discuss and improve by their suggestions.

In this way, the topics proposed by the extraordinary Definitory held in Korea, which are summarized in the call "to deepen within ourselves the essential elements of our charism's identity,

as it is embodied in the Church and in the context of today", may be dealt with in the depth and time they deserve. The commission will meet again from 22nd to 26th of March and from this will come the basic document referred to above to be studied by the General Chapter.

During the Definitory, we addressed some more technical issues referring to the Chapter, such as the approval of the norms for its celebration, the organization of the daily liturgy, the possibility of inviting people to the Chapter and, if so, who and on what days (we had specially in mind our Discalced Carmelite nuns and the non-cleric brothers) etc.

As regards the centres dependent on the Order, we discussed matters relating to the Historical Institute and the Teresianum, which will host the headquarters of the OCD Editions, which is dependent on the Italian Conference of OCD Superiors.

Fr Romano Gambalunga gave us a report on his activities as the Order's Postulator. There are many causes open at a diocesan level or in the Holy See and the miracles have already been approved for the canonization of Blessed Mariam of Jesus Crucified (the little Arab) and the married couple, Luis and Celie Martin-Guerin, the parents of St Therese. We hope to know shortly the date of their canonization. With the necessary technical advice, Fr Romano is preparing a specific Web page for the General Postulation, which will be linked to that of the Order, which will report his activities and the progress of the different processes. His work also involves much travel as, for example, the recent journey to Paraguay in order to promote the cause of beatification and canonization of the Blessed Maria Felicia of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament (Chiquitunga).

The Procurator General, Fr Jean Joseph Bergara gave us a report on his work and the matters that are being dealt with in the various Vatican congregations.

Dr. Juan Borrego, the Secretary General for communications, presented us with a balance sheet concerning the running of this such important sector of the Order during the sexennium, which he will present to the General Chapter with more complete data.

Dr. Borrego also explained to us that, before the Chapter, he will be in contact with the delegates for communication in the various circumscriptions, to find out what their impressions are on the Order's communications and what improvements they would like to see in the next sexennium. It is true that we are all a little tired of responding to surveys and questionnaires, so we have decided not to send an official one. However, we invite and we ask the Councils of the circumscriptions to deal with the topic of the Order's communications in one of their sessions before March: positive and negative elements, things to improve or include in the Web page and the strategies of communication in general, etc. Replies can be sent to: ocdinform@gmail.com and the Discalced Carmelite nuns and the Secular Order fraternities are also invited to give their opinions.

Our webmaster, Fr Johnny Paulose will travel to Spain to get in touch with the company responsible for the Web page, in order to understand better the dynamics and functioning of the same and carry out the suggestions it deems appropriate for its design and maintenance.

Fr Attilio Ghisleri gave his financial report to the General Definitory as usual. Among all the received, he drew our attention to the fact that some Provinces and Circumscriptions have not yet given their contribution to the General Finances for 2014. It is true that some, in the difficult financial situation we are in at present, would find it difficult to contribute, but it would be helpful if the Major Superiors would verify if they have or have not made their contribution for this year. With your help the General Government can give important help to our formation centres, help poor Provinces and monasteries and attend to other situation of need in the Order, as well as meeting

their own expenses. Without this help, our capability of meeting all our needs is diminished.

Br Fausto Spinelli explained the efforts that, together with the Council of the Holy Land, are being made to reorient the *Stella Maris* project in a realistic manner that suits the Order's possibilities. There is still some way to go, but with appropriate counselling, we hope to reach our aim. He also informed us about other financial matters of the Delegation, such as the restoration project for the Wadi.

After Frs Robert Paul and Roger Tshimanga visited the friars in the Chèvremont monastery in Belgium, the General Definitory decided to seek the opinion of the Congo Delegation Council, concerning the possibility of closing the monastery.

To strengthen the Order's presence in the Cameroons, Fr General asked help from the Avignon-Aquitaine and Genovese Provinces. The fruit of this petition was the incorporation of Frs Marco Gazzoli and Marie-Joseph Dol into the mission. We are enormously grateful to them for their willingness, and to their Superiors for their generosity.

We have received good news about the foundation of new Carmelite monasteries in Asia, Madagascar and Latin America and we have authorized the South Kerala Province to take charge of a parish in Khawlailung, in North East India, in an area with a very high percentage of Catholics, near to Bangladesh and Myanmar.

To end, Fr Emilio Martínez told us about the latest happenings in the fifth centenary, especially the pastoral results of the world-wide pilgrimage of Saint Teresa, the *Camino de Luz*, which is being received with great enthusiasm in all the places through which it passes.

We wish you a very happy Teresian year, full of celebrations in honour of our Mother, Teresa of Jesus. We entrust you to her with brotherly love. Your brothers:

Fr Saverio Cannistrà, Superior General

Fr Robert Paul

Fr Emilio J. Martínez

Fr Marcos Juchem

Fr Albert Wach

Fr George Tambala

Fr Augustine Mulloor

Fr John Grennan

Praise to God and the Virgin Mary