



# OCED Communications



# Extra-Ordinary Definitory

04 – 10 February 2019, Goa - India

## Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2019

**T**he Order's Extraordinary Definitory began with a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit in English, at which presided Fr General. The Definitory is being celebrated in the "St Joseph Vaz" Spirituality Centre in Old Goa (India). This great Centre is now run by the Diocese, in the place where our first missionaries lived way back in 1619, exactly 400 years ago. The extraordinary Definitory will run until Sunday, the 10th of February.

Work began with a brief opening session, introduced by Fr. Johannes Gorantla. Fr. Charles Serrao – Provincial of Karnataka-Goa and President of the Indian Provincials' Conference – and Fr. Andrew, Director of the Spiritual Center, welcomed the nearly 70 Superiors taking part in the Definitory. Fr. General was then invited to light a lamp placed in front of the presidential table, as a sign of the presence of Jesus in the midst of the assembled Definitory.

Immediately after, Fr. Saverio Cannistrà presented the general program, the coordination and method of working during the Definitory, whose objective will be the process of rereading and possible revision of our legislative "corpus" (Constitutions and Norms).

Fr Agustí Borrell, Vicar General and President of the international commission for re-

reading the Constitutions, then gave a conference presenting: "The rereading of the Constitutions. First stage: history and conclusions".

The morning session ended with a second conference of a juridical nature, given by Fr Wieslaw Kiwior, on the "Revision of OCD proper law to the present time".

In the afternoon, the work of going more deeply into the topic continued in eight geographic-linguistic groups. At the following plenary session, the secretaries of the individual groups presented in a concise manner the results of their sharing together.

Today concluded with the celebration of Vespers and prayer, in the old and beautiful church of the Spirituality Centre, which recalls an apparition of the Cross in 1619, the year of the arrival of the first Discalced Carmelite friars in India.



Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The second day of the Extraordinary Definitory began with Holy Mass at which presided Mons. Philip Neri, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, who did not want to miss the opportunity of giving his paternal blessing to this international meeting.

At 9 in the morning, the session began with a concise presentation of the work carried out yesterday. Fr. General then took the floor to present a deep and well-organized conference on the subject: “Aim, method and topics for a declaration on the charism”, a personal contribution to the decisions that the definitory will take in relation to our legislative texts. The morning came to an end, leaving ample space for personal deepening of the contents of the conference.

During the first part of the afternoon, the eight geographic-linguistic groups (Italian, Spanish A, Spanish B, French, English, Indian, Asiatic, and Central European) worked on timely questions prepared to encourage shared maturing of thoughts and leanings.

The fruit of this intense but calm work was finally shared during the last session of the afternoon, in which it was also possible to receive from Fr General some additional clarifications.

Today’s work came to an end, with Evening Prayer of Saint Agatha, in Italian. To the intercession of this Virgin and martyr we commend the options that, from now on, the Definitory will be called to make for the good of our Order.





Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The morning Eucharist was celebrated in French, commemorating the holy martyrs of Japan (Paul Miki and companions). Presiding was Fr Roger Tshimanga, the Delegate General of the Congo. The liturgy was prepared by the French-speaking group.

At the beginning of today's working session, the members of the Extraordinary Definitory were called upon to fulfil the mandate of the 2015 General Chapter (cf. Chapter document "It is time to walk", N. 32), by expressing their opinion on the various possible options: Rewriting the Constitutions, partial revision of the constitutional text or writing a Declaration concerning our charism. After having reflected extensively these days on the results of the first stage of work of rereading the Constitutions, in which during these three years all the circumscriptions and the communities of the Order have been involved, as well as on the meaning and the implications of each of the proposed options, the Extraordinary Definitory voted by a large majority to not proceed, at least for the moment, to a modification of the existing text of the Constitutions, but to undertake the drafting of a Declaration on the Charism of

the Carmelite-Teresian life. At the present time, this work has emerged as extremely necessary to regain awareness of the inalienable elements of the charism we have received for the good of the whole Church, and to express them adequately in our time.

Lukasz Kansy, a Definitor, subsequently submitted some proposals for a revision of the Norms (relating to the first part: N. 1-134). We recall that this type of updating is envisaged by our laws as a normal activity of General Chapters (cf. Constitutions 153) and does not need to be submitted to the Holy See for confirmation.

In the afternoon, the geographic-linguistic groups discussed the proposals presented in the morning. Finally, Fr Paolo De Carli, Bursar General, presented the financial report, with the help of slides, explaining the management of our general economy in relation to the various circumscriptions, insisting on the basic qualities that must characterize the good administrator (at all Levels: Local, Provincial and General) and a healthy management: responsibility, transparency and trust.



## Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

This morning we rose earlier than usual, to go on foot to the Basilica called 'Bom Jesus' in Old Goa. The body of St. Francis Xavier, the great evangelizer of the East, co-patron of the missions with St. Thérèse of Lisieux, is kept in this magnificent Jesuit church, consecrated in 1605. At 7 o'clock in the morning, we celebrated the Eucharist there, with many of the faithful present, presided in English by Fr. Luis Aróstegui Gamboa, former Superior General of the Order and Provincial of Navarre, originally from the Basque Country, like the holy Jesuit. We venerated a relic of Francis Xavier and others kept in the sacristy, including those of the Japanese martyrs, Paul Miki and companions, whose liturgical Memorial was celebrated yesterday. The working session was introduced by the moderator, Fr. Gabriel Castro, with the reading of n. 143 of the Constitutions, which recalls the spirit of the right way to govern the Order, to be borne in mind above all, when, during these few days for example, we were involved in exercising a responsibility to the whole of our family. There was a short period dedicated to a battery of questions and clarifications directed to Fr. Łukasz Kansy and the General bursar, regarding their accounts yesterday.

The rest of the morning was dedicated to listening to a penetrating presentation of a few proposals for modification of the Norms (nn. 135-276), given by Fr. Francisco Javier Mena, the Definitor General for Latin America, who was 'in person' able to meet his patron Saint in joy.

His account was of a certain importance, given the points made and the direct effect decisions made will have on the structure of the Order and various specific aspects about the governing of the Circum-

scriptions.

In the afternoon, the groups, arranged geographically and linguistically, met together to discuss this issue. At six in the evening, all the participants in the Definitory met in an Assembly for a session of questions with regard to the issues brought up in the morning conference. Immediately after, there followed three brief communications: Fr. Javier Mena was the spokesman for a petition sent by a Carmelite family in Venezuela (friars, nuns and seculars), in order to promote a campaign of prayer and intercession for this country which is undergoing such suffering, but also to seek a show of tangible solidarity. Fr. Guillaume Dehorter, the Provincial for Paris, presented the situation with regard to mission in Iraq, where there is, at the moment, just one Iraqi friar. All the friars were invited to sustain and promote the project for the refounding of the community, making a religious available for it who is endowed with the necessary abilities. Finally, the Definitor, Fr. Johannes Gorantla gave a presentation on the educational situation in the International College and the Seminarium Missionum (Community of specialists) from the Teresianum, Rome, imploring the Provinces, most of all the European ones, to make the most of the opportunities offered by our institutions. After, dinner, we were shown a beautiful video prepared by the Indian Provinces to celebrate 400 years of Carmelite presence in India. Through the telling of the history and development of our presence in the country, prepared by seven Provincials and other religious of different ages, we got to know a little better the faces and places of this area which has such significance for the Order:

<https://youtu.be/-fwU85qHQhU>





## Friday 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2019

**T**he 8th of February stood out because of meaningful events of a deeply Carmelite flavour.

At 7:30 in the morning, the group met to celebrate the Eucharist in the place where our first monastery was established in India, built in 1622 by Fr Leander of the Annunciation and his first companions who had just arrived in Goa. The decision to establish a presence of Teresian Carmelites in this far-away land was not accidental. At that time, Goa was the Capital of the Portuguese Indies with about 200,000 inhabitants and 50 religious foundations, including convents, monasteries and churches. As well, Goa had been established by the Pope as the sole diocese of the East, with jurisdiction spreading to Japan (which helps to understand better the immense extent of St Francis Xavier's missionary effort). At present, what is left of our first foundation, the "Convento do Carmo", is just some ruins surrounded by vegetation, even though the friars of the Karnataka-Goa Province have been preoccupied in cleaning up and restoring the place. In the area of the original church they discovered some important tombstones, among which stands out that of the five martyrs of Persia. For the solemn celebration - which was transmitted directly by the regional television - many of our friars and students arrived in Goa from other Provinces of our Order in India. In actual fact, we were pleased to welcome 140 students, one-half of our students in formation in the country. In his homily, Fr General recalled in a special manner Blessed Denis and Redemptus, who made their profession

precisely in this place and lived here afterwards until they were sent to the Sumatra mission in 1638, where they suffered martyrdom.

After the morning Mass, the members of the Extraordinary Definitory had the possibility of visiting the great Hindu temple Manguishi (much frequented by the people of the region, particularly by families) and the old Capuchin monastery dedicated to Our Lady "del Pilar" in the nearby city of Panji, Capital of the State of Goa. There also existed here, just for a few years in the XIXth century, a small foundation of Discalced Carmelite friars. A few kilometres away, we were joyfully welcomed with extraordinary generosity, typical of the daughters of Saint Teresa, to the Carmel of Chicalim, founded exactly on the 9th of February, 1947, which is to say, 72 years ago to the day. At present our sisters number 17, with two novices and one sister in temporary vows.

The day of celebrations for the 400th anniversary of Carmel in India concluded solemnly, just as it had begun. In our monastery in Margao, some 25 kilometres from Old Goa, a good number of the faithful and a large group of students, who had been with us in the morning, sang Vespers with us in the church, totally renovated, and dedicated precisely to Blessed Denis and Redemptus. Fr General blessed the work just finished, after which all the guests were invited to enter the most beautiful monastery garden to continue the feast, accompanied by music and a folk group of dancers.



## Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2019



On the morning of the 9th of February, the work of the Extraordinary Definitory continued with regional meetings and meetings of the various Conferences of Superiors, while the Commission entrusted with the preparing a draft of the final Document of the Definitory continued their work.

At 5:30 in the evening, a statue of Our Lady of Mt Carmel was blessed. It will be placed in the “St. Joseph Vaz” Spirituality Centre as a visible reminder of this fourth centenary of the Discalced Carmelites and of the celebration of this Extraordinary Definitory. Finally, at 6:00 in the evening, the Plenary Assembly met to listen to a communication from the Procurator General, Fr Jean-Joseph Bergara.

## Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

The last day of work. On Saturday evening, the draft of the final document from the Goa Extraordinary Definitory was distributed to the members of the Definitory. The first morning session on Sunday took place in the geographic-linguistic groups, who examined and discussed the proposed text, proposing possible additions or modifications. The result of the shared analysis was delivered by the secretaries of each group to the moderators, who integrated into the draft the observations made.

Meanwhile, at the Old Goa Cathedral, Fr. General presided at the opening session of a Seminar on the history and contribution of the Discalced Carmelites in India, during which, conferences will be given of a historical, artistic-architectural and spiritual nature, giving a look at the challenges in India today. In the last official session held in the Great Hall, the definitive text of the message was presented and approved unanimously.

After final speeches of summary, thanks and farewell by Fr Johannes Gorantla and the General, the 2019 Extraordinary General Definitory was declared concluded with the singing of the “Flos Carmeli”.

At 4:00 p.m., in the Old Goa Cathedral, took place the commemorative celebration of the IV Cente-



nary of the arrival of Carmel in India. Presiding at the Eucharist was Mons. Felipe Neri, Archbishop of Goa, and concelebrating with him were Mons. Derek Fernandes (Bishop of Karwar), Mons. Luis Pablo D'Souza (emeritus Bishop of Mangalore), as well as, naturally, our General, Fr Saverio Cannistrà, the General Definitors, the members of the Extraordinary Definitory, and also a considerable numbers of priests. Also attending the ceremony were Discalced Carmelite students who had come from all over India for this extraordinary occasion. Besides the 220 concelebrants, filling the enormous baroque cathe-





dral was a multitude of faithful, Secular Carmelites, religious from the various Carmelite congregations born in India (the most numerous has more than 6,000 Sisters).

After the Mass, under an immense marquee prepared for the occasion, the official celebration of the fourth centenary unfolded, during which were choir performances by the almost 60 students from Karnataka-Goa, the panegyrics, the official speeches of Prelates, as well as typical music and dances.

Now we go back to the daily rhythm of life, work and mission, with the pride of being the bearers of a valuable gift and with the humility of those who know that "all is a grace".





# Walking in the Truth

Message of the Extraordinary Definitory OCD  
Old Goa (India), 4 -10 February 2019

St. Paul exhorts the Christians of the community in Rome to allow themselves to be transformed by a profound personal renewal that will enable them to live always according to the will of God: “Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds, so that you will be able to discern the will of God and to know what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom 12:2). With this desire and in this spirit, the Extraordinary Definitory met from the 4th to the 10th of February 2019 in Old Goa (India), very close to the place where the presence of the Order in India began, as well as to the Basilica which guards the tomb of St. Francis Xavier, one of the great missionaries in the history of the Church. We heartily thank our brothers of Karnataka-Goa and of the other Indian provinces for their fraternal and warm welcome and the solicitude with which they prepared the meeting.

During these days we celebrated with joy the Fourth Centenary of the arrival of the first Discalced Carmelites in India (Goa 1619), and we thanked the Lord for the abundance of vocations in recent times, which has made India a country in the world that currently has the greatest number of Discalced Carmelite Friars. This double gaze at the past and the present allows us to confirm the vitality of the Teresian charism which, without disassociating itself from its historical roots, continues to develop with ever renewed energy, combining the necessary continuity with permanent updating.

## *Rereading the Constitutions*

The General Chapter held in Avila in May 2015 decided that the Order should enter into a process of reflection and discernment on how to live the charism in the present time. To this end, it asked all the friars to embark upon a prayerful and communitarian re-reading of the Constitutions, with the main objective of discovering whether our real life corresponds to the charismatic ideal and to the practical norms that regulate it. On the other hand, the reading of the constitutional text should serve to discern if it was advisable to rewrite it, in whole or in part, so that it continues to express in an updated and understandable way the permanent values that constitute the charism of our religious family.

The Definitory of Goa has been the opportune moment to gather the experience of the first stage of this process, to evaluate its results, and to guide the future steps. Following the indications and materials of the international commission - to whose members we are grateful for the effort they have made - the communities have carried out a work which in some cases has already produced good fruits of renewal and of personal and community commitment.

After analyzing the proposals and suggestions received from the whole Order on the legislative texts, the Definitory responded to the mandate entrusted to it by the General Chapter to take a decision on the way forward from now on, on the basis of these hypotheses: “re-elaboration of the Constitutions, a revision on certain points and/or drafting of a Declaration on Carmelite-Teresian life” (It is time to walk!, 32).

## *The Order in the Present Context of Change*

The process followed up to this moment has led us to verify the vitality of the Order, its capacity to be implanted and to be enculturated in multiple zones of our world. In recent years, although there has been a significant decrease in regions of traditional presence such as Europe, the expansion of the Teresian Carmel has been rapid and extensive in many other places. It is evident that so many centuries later the relevance and universality of a charism gives meaning to the lives of many people from so many different places.

At the same time, we have become aware of some tendencies in the life of the Order. One of them is the great diversity in the concrete forms of life and activity. There are notable differences of all kinds: number of members in the communities, type of apostolic service, practice of common prayer... The variety of lifestyles seems to reflect, and also produce, different ways of understanding the charism, ranging from an almost monastic vision to an approach totally centered on ministerial activities.

Another tendency we observe is the growing practical autonomy that is given at various levels in the life of the Order: from the friars to the community, from the communities to the province and, moreover, from each province to other provinces and to the Order as a whole. Together with many other factors, this tendency is certainly not alien to the increasingly marked individualism which characterizes modern societies



and which has a powerful influence on religious life. The joyful acceptance of a diversity which enriches the whole must be accompanied by a serious discernment which allows the cohesion and unity of the Order to be maintained.

### *Resuming the Path of Renewal*

One factor that has a decisive influence on the situation of the Order is the magnitude of the change that is taking place in our societies in many areas: technological, cultural, anthropological, ecclesial... The ways of living and thinking today have little to do with those of 40 or 50 years ago. We live in a world that changes more and more rapidly.

The Church needs to respond to these changes with an ongoing renewal that allows her to continue living and transmitting the Gospel message with languages and forms appropriate to the present situation, as well as to the different cultural, political and social contexts of our world. The call to be attentive and to react seriously to the changing situations and needs of the times and places made by the Second Vatican Council has not lost its validity, but must constitute a constant attitude of the Church and of all those who form it.

Consecrated religious, moved by the Spirit, have known how to respond in every historical moment with creativity and generosity to the needs of humanity, and now, too, they are called to remember with special interest and intensity the urgent invitation to renewal. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, taking up the invitation of Pope Francis to live in the newness of the Gospel, has exhorted religious to deepen the dynamics of post-conciliar renewal and to “take on the challenge of a change that requires acceptance, as well as discernment. We must create structures that are truly faithful to preserve the innovative richness of the Gospel so that it can be experienced and put to the service of all, while preserving its quality and goodness” (New Wine in New Wineskins, 2).

Of course, our Order must do the same. Father General, in his presentation in this Extraordinary Definitory, stressed that the main theme at this moment is precisely “that of renewal, that is, of adapting the ways of understanding and living the charism in the changed anthropological context of our time”; it is a question of “resuming the journey of renewal begun, but certainly not concluded with the approval of the post-conciliar Constitutions” (Objective, method and themes of a charismatic declaration, p. 2 and 11). Following the recent directions of the Church, our Discalced Carmelite sisters are also advancing on this path.

### *Revision of Legislative Texts*

A revision of the Constitutions and of the Applicative Norms would undoubtedly be a help in this desire for renewal and charismatic updating that we share. The Constitutions, like any legislative text, are necessarily limited and contingent, and require permanent updating. However, we have noted that the Order as a whole values the richness of the present Constitutions and does not feel the need for a thorough reworking of the text. There is a more shared impression that it would be possible and necessary to revise some concrete points; however, the consensus is far from being the majority, and even less on what elements to modify, suppress or add. We are also aware that a serious and profound updating of the Constitutions requires a prior time of doctrinal reflection and process of assimilation in the whole Order, which will necessarily be long, regarding the Carmelite-Teresian charism and the signs of the times and places.

For all these reasons, the Extraordinary Definitory has decided not to undertake for the time being the drafting of a new constitutional text, nor the revision of the present one. Many of the proposals for modification that have been presented can be assumed with the revision of the Applicative Norms, which is in the competency of the General Chapter already foreseen in the legislative text itself. In this sense, during the Definitory of Goa we have already begun the dialogue on some of the points that it would be advisable to revise, starting from the suggestions received from the communities and from the experience of the General Definitory. The work will continue during the coming months so that the General Chapter can have the necessary instruments to advance in this revision.

### *Towards a Charismatic Declaration*

In keeping with the desire expressed by a considerable number of circumscriptions of the Order, the Extraordinary Definitory has accepted by a large majority to undertake the drafting of a Declaration on Carmelite-Teresian life (sources, history, actuality), which was one of the possibilities pointed out by the General Chapter of 2015.



As defined by Father General, the objective of this Declaration would be “to help read and understand the charism and Constitutions in a way appropriate to the present time, its challenges, and the diverse socio-cultural contexts in which the Order is present.” It is a question, then, of presenting in a synthetic way and with an updated language the essential elements of our charismatic identity, those which define us as a particular family in the Church and which we all aspire to put into practice, whatever our place of origin or residence, our culture, our community, or our activity.

An indispensable first step is to truly return to the sources of our family and our spirituality. On the other hand, it is necessary to know and analyze with clarity the reality of our times. We must also take into account the diversity of regions, cultures and situations in which we are currently living. The adequate conjunction of these perspectives should allow for an updating of the forms of expression and of the ways of living the charism that will give it new strength and vigor.

The document that we want to give ourselves is called to be an updated exposition of our charismatic identity, a reference text with which we all feel identified, to help us strengthen our sense of belonging to the Order and to guide us in the commitment to respond with joyful fidelity to the call we have received from the Lord to live in his service in the family initiated by Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross. Such an updated redefinition of our identity should also contribute to reinforcing some of the weaker aspects of our present way of walking in the truth and of living with creative fidelity.

#### *The Itinerary to Follow*

The General Definitory will take on the task of specifying how to prepare the revision of the Applicative Norms and the drafting of the Charismatic Declaration. While the qualified contribution of concrete persons will be fundamental, means will also be sought to facilitate and include in the process a wide participation of the circumscriptions of the Order.

Therefore, we are all invited from now on to deepen our reflection on our charismatic identity and on our legislative texts, maintaining in the communities the spirit and the practice of fraternal dialogue on these topics which we have intensified in recent months with regard to the Constitutions.

Above all, we are called to foster an attitude of ongoing renewal, which presupposes a sincere and constant openness to the Spirit who speaks to us through the Word of God, the brothers and history. We must continue to nourish the desire to assimilate and to live the elements that make up our identity with enthusiastic commitment.

All the members of the Teresian Carmel family (friars, nuns and laity) are committed to this path of renewal, on which we must advance together. We thank everyone for praying to the Lord that this process will bear fruit for the good of the Church and of humanity.

At the end of our meeting in Goa, we entrust ourselves in a special way to the Blessed Carmelite Martyrs Denis and Redemptus, who began here the journey of Carmelite life that led them to give witness to Christ with the offering of their own lives. We invoke upon the whole Order the protection of Mary, Mother of Carmel, so that she may help us now and always to walk in the truth.

Old Goa, 10 February 2019.



## **Carmelite Online Retreat Lent 2019**

with

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**Teresia Benedicta a Cruce OCD**

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