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COMMUNICATIONES



# General Definitory

**O**n the 2nd of September, the Ordinary meeting of the General Definitory began, chaired by Fr Saverio Cannistrà and in the presence of all the Definitors. This meeting takes place after the summer break in the northern hemisphere, which our Superiors use to carry out various activities and visits and take a few days of deserved rest.

On the agenda of the Definitory was a draft Declaration on the Charism, as well as the process of reviewing the Norms, which were discussed and adopted, taking into account what was approved by the



General Definitory held in Goa, India. Among other issues, which will be communicated in detail in the traditional “Letter of the Definitory”, the question was addressed concerning the most opportune place in which to celebrate next year’s General Definitory, which follows the Provincial Chapters and precedes the General Chapter.



## News from the Order’s Information Secretariat

**C**oinciding with the start of the ordinary session of the General Definitory on the 2nd of September, the team in charge of the Communication of the Order, under the direction of Fr Agustí Borrell, Vicar General and directly responsible for this area, met at the General House to present some proposals for the future to the Fr General and the Definitors.

In the first place, since Fr Johny Paulose, until now Webmaster, has returned to his Province (South Kerala, India), the Definitory has decided that he be replaced by Mr. Lorenzo Barone, a Secular Carmelite belonging to the Province of Central Italy. Over here, we would like to give heart-felt thank to Fr Johny for all his work done in recent years, both in the community of the General House and in his service in caring for the Order's website and the COMMUNICATIONES newsletter.

Fr Emilio José Martínez will continue in charge of the Secretariat, which will endeavour to provide the Order with up-to-date information from Father General, the Definitors and the Officials of the Curia, by means of the website and the COMMUNICATIONS newsletter, without forgetting important events of the Order held at the regional level. Other news about the Circumscriptions will be communicated through the social networks of the Order, which can be accessed from the same website, [www.carmelitaniscalzi.com](http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com) including being registered in them. We encourage you to use these easily found information "windows" at the bottom of the page or through the "buttons" at the top right.



For those who use social networks, we remind you of our addresses:

Facebook: Curia Generalizia Carmelitani Scalzi

Twitter: @ocdcuria

Instagram: ocdinform

YouTube: OCD Curia

We encourage you to share your news with us by writing to one of these two email addresses:

[ocdinform@gmail.com](mailto:ocdinform@gmail.com) or [ocdinfoweb@gmail.com](mailto:ocdinfoweb@gmail.com)

## New Webmaster: Lorenzo Barone

**L**orenzo Barone is a member of the OCDS in the Central Italian Province (OCD). He was born in Rome, 5 July 1992. From 2001 to 2003 he was a member of the Pueri Cantores of the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir.





Having received a diploma from the “Alessandro Caravillani” Artistic High School in Rome, he attended the Academy of Arts and New Technologies. He graduated from here with professional qualifications in Publicity Graphics (2012), Graphics Visualizer (2013) and Assistant Art Director (2015).

For some years now, Sig.re Barone has collaborated with the Carmelite Fathers at the “Casa S. Silves-

tro” Spirituality Centre in Monte Compatri (Rome). He has also worked as Web Director with various important Publicity Agencies in Rome. He re-styled the new Site of the Central Italian Province and arranged the graphics for the travelling exhibition “Born for You” (“Nata per Te”) which was produced by the same Province for the 5th Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa of Jesus.

## Impromptu address of the Holy Father. Midday prayer in the Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites (Antananarivo. Saturday, 7 September 2019)

**Y**ou will be given a copy of the text I prepared, so that you can read and ponder it quietly. But right now I would like to speak to you from the heart.

The reading from the First Book of Kings (2:2b-3) was addressed to Joshua. It begins with an appeal to be courageous: “Be strong, and show yourself a man!” Courageous. To follow the Lord, we always need courage, a bit of courage. It is true that the Lord does the heavy work, yet courage is required to let him do it.

I recall something that has helped me



greatly in my life as a priest and as a bishop. Late one evening, two nuns, one very young and the other very old, were walking from the chapel, where they had just prayed vespers, towards the refectory. The old nun had difficulty walking and the young nun tried to help her, but the old nun was irritable. She

said: "Don't touch me! Don't make me fall!" God knows, maybe sickness made the old nun a bit irascible. Smiling, the young nun accompanied her. Eventually they arrived in the refectory and the young nun tried to help her sit down, and the old nun said: "Stop it, you're hurting me, you're hurting me here...", but in the end, she sat down. A young person experiencing all this surely would have loved to send her packing! But that young woman smiled, took a piece of bread, prepared it and gave it to her. This is not some edifying story; it happened. The old nun was called Sister Saint Pierre, and the young nun, Sister Therese of the Child Jesus.

A true story, and one that gives us a glimpse into community life; it shows the spirit with which one can live in community. Charity in little things and in big things. That young woman could have thought, "Tomorrow I will go to the Prioress and ask if she could send someone stronger to help this old woman because I can't do it". But she didn't think like that. She believed in obedience: "I have been given this job and in obedience I will do it". With the strength born of obedience, she did this work with exquisite charity. I know that all of you, cloistered nuns, have come here to be close to the Lord, to seek the way of perfection; but the way of perfection can be found in these small steps along the path of obedience. Small steps of charity and love. Small steps that look like nothing, yet small steps that attract, that "seduce" God; little threads that "disarm" God. This

young woman was thinking about the thread with which she can disarm God; she was thinking about the cords – the cords of love – which are the small acts of charity. Small, very small, because our little soul cannot do great things.

Be strong! Have the courage to take little steps, the courage to believe that your littleness makes God happy and brings salvation to the world. - "No, but I think religious life should be changed, it should be made more perfect and more divine, and for this I want to become a Prioress, a Superior, in order to bring about the change!..." I'm not saying that some of you think like this... But the devil instils these thoughts. If you want to transform and save the world with Jesus – and not just the monastery and religious life – it begins with these little acts of love and self-sacrifice, which "trap" God and bring him close to us.

Let's go back to the story of the young nun and the old nun. One of those nights, before dinner, while they were going from the chapel to the refectory – they used to leave the chapel ten minutes early, to walk slowly to the refectory – Therese heard the sound of music from outside the convent, the sound of a party and dancing... And she imagined a party where young men and women were dancing, a nice family party, like a wedding or a birthday. She thought about the music and everything else, and she felt something inside. Maybe she felt: "It would be nice to be there". I don't know. But immediately, and firmly, she said to the Lord that she would never, ever trade any of her kindness-

es to the old nun for that worldly party. Those kindnesses made her happier than all the dances in the world.

Worldliness will surely approach you in many hidden guises. Together with your Prioress and the monastic community, learn how to discern the voices of worldliness, so that they don't make their way into the cloister. Worldliness is not like a cloistered nun; rather, it is like a goat that wanders in and leads you away from the cloister... When thoughts of worldliness come to you, close the door and think of small acts of love: these are what save the world. Therese chose to take care of the old nun and to keep moving ahead.

What I'm going to tell you now is not to frighten you, but it is a reality. Jesus himself said it, so allow me to say it too. To enter the monastery, each of you had to fight; you did so many good things and you conquered the worldly spirit, sin, and the devil. Perhaps, on the day you entered the monastery, the devil stopped at the monastery door, dejected, and said: "I have lost a soul", and then left. But then he went and sought the advice of another devil, one older and more astute, who surely told him: "Just be patient, wait..." This is the devil's typical way of acting. Jesus says so. When a devil loses a soul, he leaves and comes back later and sees that beautiful, orderly and wonderful soul, and he wants to return to it.

What does Jesus tell us? That devil then goes and looks for seven others worse than he is and comes back with them to enter the orderly house.

But they don't enter loudly, like thieves; they enter politely. These "polite" devils ring the bell and say: "Might I come in? Could you help me with this or that?" Then they are allowed in. They are polite devils, they come into the house, settle in and then, Jesus says, the end of that man or woman is worse than the beginning. - But didn't you realize that this was an evil spirit? - "No, he was so polite, so nice! And now, no, I'm going home because I can't take it any more". Now it's too late; you let him enter too deeply into your heart. Didn't you realize, couldn't you have talked to the Prioress, couldn't you have talked with the Superior or with some of the Sisters in the community?

The tempter does not want to be discovered; that is why he disguises himself as a noble, educated person, and even at times as a spiritual father... Please, Sister, when you feel something strange, talk right away! Speak up! Make it known. If Eve had spoken up in time, if she had gone to the Lord to tell him: "This snake is telling me such and such; what do you think?" If only she had spoken up on time! But Eve did not speak up, and then disaster struck. So this is my advice: when there is something that troubles your tranquility, speak up immediately, speak on time. I do not say your peace, but even before peace, your tranquility. This is the help, the defense you have in community, that each of you helps the other to form a united front, to defend holiness, to defend the glory of God, to defend love, to defend the monastery.

- “But shouldn’t feel well protected from spiritual worldliness and from the devil because we have double grill and a curtain!” The double grill and the curtain are not enough. You could have hundreds of curtains! Charity and prayer are required. The charity needed to ask in time for advice from the Sisters and from the Prioress. But also say a prayer to the Lord: “Lord, is it real, what I am feeling; what the serpent is telling me, is it true?” The young Therese, as soon as she felt something inside, spoke about it with her Prioress, the Prioress, who didn’t like her! - “But how can I go to the Prioress if she snarls at me every time I go to her!” Yes, but the Prioress is Jesus. - “But, Father, the Prioress is not a good person, she’s bad”. Let the Lord decide that; for you, the Prioress is Jesus. - “But the Prioress is a bit old, things are not working well...”. Let the chapter decide; if you want to bring this forward, say it at the chapter, but you have to report to the Prioress, because she is Jesus. There should always be transparency of the heart! You always win by speaking up.

So then, Therese, who knew that the Prioress did not like her that much, would go to her anyway. Well, we have to realize that not all Prioresses get the Nobel Prize for sympathy! But they are Jesus. The path of obedience is one that submits you to love, that makes us submissive to love.

Then, Therese got sick. She fell ill and little by little she thought she was losing her faith. The poor thing, who in her life knew how to deal with the “polite”

devils, was, at the time of her death, at a loss; she couldn’t cope with the devil that was besetting her. She would say: “I can see him circling around me”. The darkness of the last days and months of life. When it comes to temptation and spiritual warfare, charity does not go into retirement: you have to keep fighting to the end. To the very end.



Even when you are surrounded by darkness. Therese thought she had lost her faith! So she called for the nuns to sprinkle holy water on her bed and to bring blessed candles... In the monastery, the battle continues to the end. But it is a beautiful battle, for in this cruel but magnificent battle, when it is real, peace is never lost.



I'm sure you are going say: "This Pope is a bit 'folksy'; instead of talking theology, he talked to us like children. Would that you were all children, at least in spirit. With that aspect of being a child that the Lord loves so dearly!

I would like to finish the story of Therese and that old woman. That same Therese now accompanies an old man. I would like to give a testimony about this, because she has accompanied me at every step of the way. She taught me

how to walk. Sometime I am a little irritable and I send her away, as Mother Saint Pierre did. Sometimes I listen to her; sometimes my troubles keep me from listening carefully... But she is a faithful friend. That is why I didn't want to talk to you in the abstract; I wanted to share with you my experience with a saint, and in doing so, to tell you about what a saint can do and about the path to becoming saints.

Be strong! And keep going!

# The IVth Congress of the Teresian Carmel in Africa & Madagascar

**B**etween 14th and 18th October 2019 the IVth International Congress of the Discalced Carmel for Africa and Madagascar will be celebrated in Yaounde, Cameroon. The central theme will be fraternal life, a space in which the personal vocation to follow Christ is expressed and is gift of Trinitarian communion, establishing a new hierarchy of human relationships to create fraternal links beyond that of blood, race and cultures. About seventy people are expected to take part including, friars, discalced nuns and secular Carmelites.

The community dimension is of particular relevance to elements of the Teresian charisma and is indispensable in responding to the vocation to continuous prayer (cfr.





Way of Perfection 4,5), thus the Teresian Carmel in Africa and Madagascar wants to examine community life in the cultural and ecclesial context where it finds itself, taking note of the evaluation made by communities with regard to this dimension and by identifying existing weaknesses to encourage Carmel in its task to radiate fraternal and contemplative life in its service to the Church and the world in that particular part of the world.

The title of the Congress is “The Teresian Carmel in Africa and Madagascar in dialogue with the cultures of the area: a glimpse at fraternal life” and has been organised in partnership with the gener-

al governing body of the Order, in particular with Fr. Daniel Ehigie, OCD (general definitor) and Fr. Jerome Paluku (General Secretary for Missionary Cooperation). Speakers will include, amongst others, the Congolese Fr. Valentín Ntumba, OCD, coordinator of the organising commission, Sr. Domitile from the feminine Discalced Carmel of the Marble Coast, Fr. Antonio María Zacharias Igirukwayo, OCD (delegate from Runda-Urundi), Fr. Emile M’bra, OCD (delegate for West Africa) and Fr. Miguel Márquez, OCD (Provincial for the Iberian Provincia), as well as Fr. General, Saverio Cannistrà, OCD.



## Activities of Fr. General & the Definitors

**O**n 24th September, Fr. General, who was invited to participate in the General Chapter of the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance (O Carm), arrived in Sassone, near Rome. He presided at the 8 O’clock Mass, after which he gave a conference on

transmitting the charisma, which is the main thrust of the Chapter. Let us not forget that on St. Albert of Jerusalem's feast day, our brothers elected a new General Fr. Mícéal O'Neill from Ireland, who takes the place of the Spaniard, Fernando Millán, after twelve years of rule. The following day, Fr. Saverio met with nuns from the Italian federations who were at the Teresianum, taking a course for formators. Fr. Agustí Borrell, for his part, undertook a trip to Spain to carry out a pastoral visit of the Province of Navarre, while Fr. Daniel Chowning was making a visit to the Anglo-Irish Province. Fr. Daniel Ehigie is finalizing preparations for the Congress to be held for Africa and Madagascar. We will report about this on this page together with the organising committee and with the collaboration of Fr. Jerome Paluku,



Secretary for Missionary Co-operation in the General Curia. The remaining definitors, with the exception of Fr. Łukasz Kansy, who for the moment is with the Curia, were also at this time away from the centre, undertaking various activities in the geographical areas for which they are responsible.











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**Casa Generalizia, Carmelitani Scalzi,  
Corso D'Italia 38, 00198 Roma,  
Italia**

**[www.carmelitaniscalzi.com](http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com)**