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# OCD

# COMMUNICATIONES







# Charismatic Declaration: Second workshop in India



**I**n order to facilitate a better participation, the Indian Definitor Fr. Johannes Gorantla has organized the Workshops on the Charismatic Declaration in two places. The first workshop, organized from 16-19 at Trivandrum was meant for the Provinces of Malabar, Manjummel and South Kerala. Around 25 religious between the ages of 35-45 participated in it. The Second workshop was organ-

ised from 20-23 January at Mysuru for the Provinces of Karnatak Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Delhi. There were 32 Participants. On the first day, as usual, Fr. Johannes began the workshop with an exposition of the document: its context, background, relevance and the objective of the workshop etc.. He continued for another couple of sessions helping the participants understand the general structure and content of the

text and a profound reading and understanding of the first three sections on Vocation, formation and the Teresianum anthropology. Fr. Pius D'Souza and Fr. Maria David helped the participants in the understanding of the first two elements of the Charism namely Communion with God and Fraternal life in the community, while Fr. Archibald Gonsalves expounded the third element of the charism namely, the Mission. After the exposition from the part of the resource persons, questions related to the text, content, relevance, challenges in living them, context in which they are to be lived etc.. were given to the groups for discussion. At the end of the day the groups presented the fruits of their discussion in the plenary assembly. The discussions were always fruitful and lively as the participants were mostly young, relatively experienced, committed and educated friars with a great passion to live the charism. There was a great appreciation

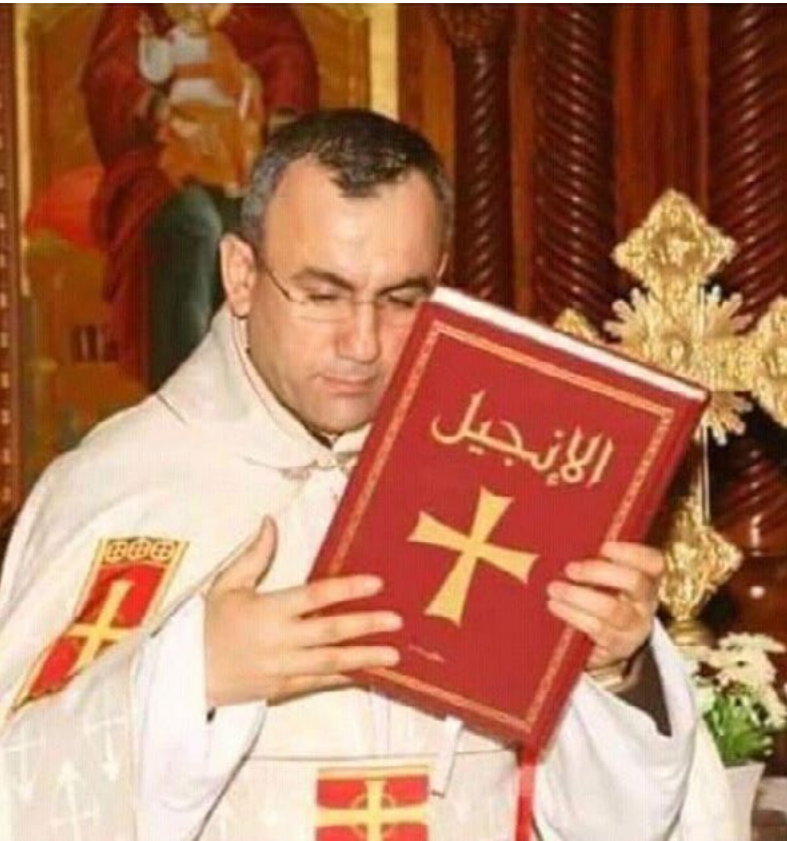


from the part of the participants for the beautiful document, and for the efforts that the Order is making to reformulate the essential elements of our charism in a language that is understandable to the religious today. They really felt that this is an inspiration and work of the Holy Spirit. They sincerely thanked the General Definitory for organizing such a fruitful workshop. They said that these were days of great fraternity and renewal for each one of them. At the end all returned to their respective provinces with great enthusiasm to live the charism as faithfully as possible. They left valuable suggestions and comments to enrich the document and our reflection.





# APPOINTMENTS



**I**n recent days, we received news of two important appointments that have been placed on members of our Order.

On the one hand, Father Raymond Abdo, ocd, Provincial of Lebanon, informed us that our brother, Father Michel Abboud, Superior of the Kobayat monastery, has been appointed National President of Caritas-Lebanon by the Lebanese Episcopal Conference. This is a high-profile office, taking into account, among other things, the situation of the country at the moment.

In addition, Fr. Szczepan Tadeusz Prakiewicz, ocd, of the Krakow Province, has

been appointed by the Holy Father Pope Francis as a Relator of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, of which he was a Consultant.

We congratulate our brethren and assure them of our prayers.







# Activity of Fr General

**F**rom the 4th of January to the 2nd of February, Fr. Saverio Cannistrà, ocd, made a pastoral visit to the Caribbean Commissariat. In this area of jurisdiction, our religious are present in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Miami. In addition to visiting all the friars' communities, Father General was able to meet our Discalced Carmelite sisters and the communities of the Secular Order. The visit ended with the celebration





of the Chapter of the Commissariat, at which presided Fr Saverio. Elected as Commissar was Fr Jacinto Rosario and as Councillors, Frs Fernando Sánchez, Sandy Fernández and Jorge Montoya.

We can add here that Fr Javier Mena, present at various Chapters held in these days, ended his American journey by presiding over the Chapter of the Delegation of Argentina, accompanied by the new Delegate, Fr Ricardo Prado, until now in charge of formation.



# Fire in Vilvoorde Carmel

**W**hile bushfires caused havoc in Australia and Taal Volcano erupted in the Philippines, the Sisters in Vilvoorde

Carmel in Belgium had to deal with a fire in the monastery church, Troost Basilica. Two children had set alight the Christmas crib at the entrance to the church. Shortly after four in the afternoon of January 6 this year a very concerned neighbour rang at the enclosure door in panic to inform the Sisters that the crib was on fire. Providentially, there was a man praying inside the basilica at that very hour. Hearing the commotion he went outside and saw the fire. Since he had no cellphone with him he asked the owner of a store across the street to call the fire department and the police.

The fire-fighters arrived very quickly and put out the fire before it could spread to the interior of the basilica. However, the central heating installation at the back of the crib was totally burned, causing much damage. The smoke coming from it crept inside the basilica and left its traces on the newly-restored white walls, painting and statues. The pipes of the seventeenth-century organ needs to be tested by an expert to see if their sound has been affected.

The mayor of Vilvoorde came at once to assure the Sisters that everything was



under control. He told the press that it was merely *kattenkwaad*, literally in Flemish ‘evil done by a cat’, meaning mischief by someone not realising the consequences.

At first we thought that the fire might be related to bombings and attacks in the recent past in Belgium. But witnesses saw two children running away from the basilica. One of the children told his mother what he and his friend had done. She surrendered her child to the police, an act that gained much appreciation in the media. The names of the children have been withheld from the public to protect them. But they were said to have undergone disciplinary action, especially the older one. This reassured us that it wasn’t an act of terrorism. Until this time of writing we are still waiting for the official report from the police.

Also as of this writing, the basilica is still



temporarily closed to the public because a team of experts and insurance assessors have been inspecting the building, estimating the damage and the cost of repairing it. The basilica and everything in it will have to be cleaned, the heating installation replaced and the burned part of the building repaired and so on. Because the basilica is a protected monument every step has to be approved by the government and proper documentation done.

The official name of the basilica in Flemish is Onze-Lieve-Vrouw ten Troost Kerk, the Church of Our Lady of Consolation, known simply as Troost Kerk. We trust in God's providence and in Our Lady of Consolation, our monastery's patroness. When and how everything will be restored remains to be seen. In the meantime Mass is celebrated in the weekday chapel inside and on Sundays in the sacristy building.

On the evening of January 5, Epiphany Sunday, the Sisters had gone to the different cribs in the monastery singing Christmas carols. They went first to the entrance of the basilica after it was closed, not knowing that it would be the last time that they would see the old nativity images, which for years had stood there every Christmas season. Years ago a statue of a sheep was stolen and van-

dalized. We placed a grille in the following years. But the grille could not keep out the match sticks that the boys took from our devotional room.

However, we have many reasons to thank God: the Sisters are all safe and the cloister and most of the basilica were spared from the fire. We thank God and Our Lady of Consolation for protecting us. We also feel for the parents of the two children and we pray that the two boys may learn a lesson from the whole experience.

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The Carmel of Vilvoorde, founded in 1469, is the oldest continually-existing community of Carmelite nuns in the world and the only surviving Carmel founded by Blessed John Soreth himself. She celebrated the 550th anniversary of her foundation last February 11, 2019. Vilvoorde Carmel joined the Teresian Reform in 1966, an unprecedented and unique event in the history of the Carmelite Order. Considering the ages of the Sisters (7 Belgians: 77-90; 5 Filipinas: 40-62 years old) the community is still open to accept Sister-volunteers from other Carmels who feel called to the Foreign Missions, to help preserve this very precious heritage of the Order. The community speaks Flemish-Dutch and English. You may get in touch with them via email addresses:

[zusters.karmelietessen@belgacom.net](mailto:zusters.karmelietessen@belgacom.net)  
[carmel\\_troost@belgacom.net](mailto:carmel_troost@belgacom.net)





# Coronavirus

**F**rom the General Curia itself we want, first of all, to thank you for all the signs of closeness and concern that are coming to us these days.

Thank God, maintaining the isolation recommended by the Italian government, the situation of the General Government of the Order is good and there are no cases of coronavirus infection (COVID-19).

At this grave moment, we wish to express our closeness and affection to all members of the Order. We also feel united to all the men and women who are suffering, to varying extent, the effects of this pandemic and we invite you all to

pray fervently and trustingly for the deceased, for all the sick and their families and, in a very particular way, for those who govern us and for those who work, with hardly any rest, to care for those affected.





# Meeting of formators from Europe



**A**s we reported a few weeks ago, the annual meeting of formators of the European Conference of Provincials was held recently from the 27th of January to the 1st of February at the Teresianum in Rome. Presiding at the meeting was Fr Juan de Bono, ocd, President of the Conference. The more than thirty religious attending the meeting represented almost all of the circumscriptions belonging to the Conference.





The subject for reflection was the religious vows. The lectures were given by Father Giuseppe Crea, a Combonian, and Dr. Gian Franco Poli, followed by a meeting in linguistic groups that was later shared in the plenary assembly. Fr. Agustí Borrell, ocd, First Definitor General, was able to meet with the formators on the morning of the 29th of January when he discussed with them the Declaration on our Charism. On the 1st of February, accompanied by P. Lukasz Kansy, ocd, the Second Definitor General, he met with the formators of the Iberian Province, to draw up with them the program for the European Second Novitiate. Next year, God willing, the meeting will take place at CTeS in Avila, with the topic yet to be decided by the Council of the Conference.





# New federation in India

**6** monasteries of Kerala (Thiruvalla, Kottiyam, Makayattoor, Eramallor, Kolayad and Trivandrum) and 3 from Srilanka (Colombo, Galle and Kandy) joined together to form a new federation under the patronage of St. John of the Cross. After receiving the decree of approval from the Holy See they celebrated their first general assembly from 24-26 January 2020 at Bangalore. Fr. Johannes Gorantla, the Definitor incharge of South Asia and Fr. Raffael secretary for the nuns were present to assist the assembly.







In this general assembly there were 18 members from 9 monasteries that constitute the Federation and 2 guests from a new foundation (Thamarassery).

The new office bearers of the federation are:

Rev. Sr. Anjali, (Kolayad), President.  
 Rev. Sr. Angeline (Kandy). 1 councillor.  
 Rev. Sr. Sharlet (Thiruvalla), 2 councillor.  
 Rev. Sr. Therese (Colombo), 3 councillor.  
 Rev. Sr. Rosario (Trivandrum), 4 councillor.  
 Rev. Sr. Cicily (Eramalloor), Treasurer.





# Meeting of Major Superiors from the Anglophone Africa



**T**he Conference of Major Superiors of Anglophone Africa held its annual meeting in Kenya from Sunday the 2nd to Friday the 7th, in Nairobi-Kenya. Here is the communiqué issued by the Conference:

Dear Brothers,

We, the Conference of Major Superiors of Anglophone Africa, send you heartfelt fraternal greetings.

1. We held our annual meeting at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Carmelite Community Kiserian – Kenya from the 2nd to 7th February 2020. Dur-





ing these days, we prayerfully reflected on the state of affairs of the Order in our respective circumscriptions. We would like to share the following with you:

2. We continue to give thanks to the Lord of the Vineyard for the seed of the Carmelite Vocation planted in our respective African soils through the generous labours of our Mother Provinces. We are equally grateful for the so many positive signs of the growth and flourishing of this seed of Carmel in our lands. While appreciating the sacrifice of the missionaries still accompanying us, we continue to pray the Lord of the Harvest to send more dedicated labourers into his vineyard and grant success to the work of our hands.

3. We gladly acknowledge that the 4th Teresian Congress for Africa held in October 2019 was a huge success in fostering growth and communion between the two language zones. We, therefore, express our most profound gratitude to our Father General, Very Rev. Fr. Saverio Canistra and the Definitor for Africa, Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Ehigie for their respective invaluable contributions towards the success of the Congress. Our special appreciation goes to Frs Philbert Namphande and Fr Emile M'Bra, the respective Presidents of the Anglophone and Francophone Conferences. The members of the Planning Committee chaired by Fr Valentin Ntumba, Fr Jerome Paluku, the Secretary of the Missionary Cooperation Office, the local organizing committee, as





well as the Friars of the host circumscription and the Provincial Delegation of Cameroon. We remind all the participants at the Congress of their responsibility to ensure that the fruits of the Congress are duly disseminated. To further exchange and facilitate the internalization of the gains of the Congress, we on our part, will intensify efforts to see to the timely publication and distribution of the various presentations at the Congress.

Also, given the importance of such events seen in the warm reception of the various presentations and encounters, as well as the need to keep abreast with contemporary realities as they affect us, we agreed that henceforth the Teresian African Congress will be a sexennial event.

4. We recognized the beauty of collaboration as it contributed immensely to the success of the 4th Teresian Congress. We therefore renewed our resolve to promote collaboration both within and across our circumscriptions. We hereby enjoin all our Friars, especially those responsible for the formation of our young religious, to explore ways of collaborating with those in other circumscriptions and language zones.

The nuns, OCDS and affiliate institutes are to be seen as important members of the Carmelite family. Hence, they are to be included in our efforts at effective collaboration. We are greatly pleased with the services rendered by the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation (ISRF) of Tangaza University College for and on behalf of the Order. We encourage all our members to take advantage of the resources that the Institute offers in the areas of Spirituality and Religious/Psychological formation.

We remain very grateful to Fr Remigius Ikpe, the outgoing Director of the Institute for his selfless service, and we wish Fr Patrick Ekpada the best as he prepares to assume the responsibility of directorship of the Institute by May 2020.

5. Guided by the General Definitory for Africa, Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Ehigie, we reflected on Fr. General's letter to Provinces preparing for Chapters and the document from the Definitory on the Charismatic Declaration of the Order, and applied the issues raised therein to our own circumscriptions in Africa: to rediscover, embrace and promote communion at all levels especially with the central government of the Order; to adopt the style and structure of governance in tune with the spirit of the gospel and our Teresian Carmelite traditions; and to eschew those attitudes and activities that militate against our Carmelite identity.

We thank our mother-provinces for their continued support; and we appreciate our Friars in the Kenya region for their wonderful gesture of fraternal hospitality. We entrust you all to the maternal care of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the intercession of our Holy Father, St Joseph.







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