

Commission for the Rereading of the OCD Constitutions

# A Lamp for my Feet

Rereading the Constitutions for a Renewal of Life

## Study Guide 0

Concluding Document of the 91<sup>st</sup>  
OCD General Chapter



General House  
Discalced Carmelites  
Rome 2015



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Rereading the Constitutions for a Renewal of Life



## **Study Guide 0**

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## INTRODUCTION

The past General Chapter held in Avila between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, approved that the entire Order would undertake a rereading of the Constitutions (CC) throughout the sexennium 2015-2021 in view of a renewal of our life. (cf. *It Is Time To Walk! Conclusive document of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Chapter*, n. 28).<sup>1</sup> We understand this reading as a continuation of what we did during the past sexennium with the works of St. Teresa. (cf. ITW, 6-7.14)

Prior to reading the Constitutions, it is necessary that all the communities attentively read and reflect on the conclusive document of the General Chapter. To accompany this reading, we offer this study guide for your personal and communal use.

To facilitate this study, we have divided the document into four parts. We suggest that you undertake this study in two or three community meetings that need to take place before the end of 2015. Included with this study guide are several appendices that can help you to understand better the context of the text.

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<sup>1</sup> From now on we will refer to this document as ITW in English. The Spanish reference is: ETC.

## READING GUIDE

*Before beginning to read...*

It would also be helpful to read individually the *Report on the State of the Order* presented by Father General to the Chapter on May 5, 2015. You will find this report in the booklet: *It Is Time To Walk!*

We have also made available the *Introduction* to the *Instrumentum laboris* of the General Chapter (Appendix 1). This can be a great help to understand better the context of the conclusive document.

We also offer you a reflection on the meaning of Constitutions of the Institutes of Consecrated Life *before* and *after* the Second Vatican Council (Appendix 2).



## IN THE PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL READING...

### Part one, ns. 1-14:

In this first part of the conclusive document, we find the motivations to begin a theological and spiritual reading of the Constitutions.

After having read individually this part of the document, you can share your reflections in a community meeting with the help of these and other similar questions.<sup>2</sup>

- What attitudes and feelings does this proposal made by the General Chapter to read the Constitutions in a new way provoke in you?
- Do we have an attitude of acceptance, desire for deeper study, and of living the Constitutions? What place in our initial and on-going formation do the Constitutions have?
- Do you think a *spiritual and prayerful reading* of the Constitutions is a good idea?
- What type of interaction or of *positive tension* is there between our life and this text that describes it and guides it? Have the Constitutions changed our life, or has our life changed the Constitutions?
- In your community (or province), is there this “vital and experiential distance between our daily life and the texts of our Constitutions” that this document talks about?

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<sup>2</sup> As we have indicated, these questions are meant to accompany the personal and communal reflection on the document. A written response to these questions is not necessary.



*Part two (ns. 15-18):*

These numbers remind us of the need to listen to the signs of the times in order to be able to incarnate faithfully the charism bequeathed to us. A call that, moreover, we find in the Constitutions. “Each of us receives a personal call to this family. As a renewed form of an ancient Order it entails both fidelity to the spirit and traditions of Carmel and a continual striving after renewal. This is as it were the dual heritage bequeathed to us by our Holy Mother St. Teresa.” (C.1)

We suggest that you accompany the reading of these numbers with the second chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

After having read individually this part of the document, you can share your reflections in a community meeting with the help of these or other similar questions:

- Has your community examined if it is responding objectively and rightly to “the new demands constantly being made on us, to the cry of the poor?”
- In what ways can the rereading of the Constitutions help us to respond to the preceding questions?
- Do you perceive in yourself and your community a true desire to live the charism in creative fidelity?



*Part three (ns. 19-27):*

Here the document proposes criteria in order to review our life in light of the signs of the times. Extracted from a sociological model, they are applied to our religious and Carmelite life with the objective of acting as a means to discern the quality and depth of our present life and in conformity with the ideal proposed by our Constitutions.

To help understand and use them, we recommend that you read the appendix document we have prepared entitled: *A pedagogical reading of the sociological model presented in numbers 19-24 of ITW* (Appendix 3).

After having read individually this part of the document, you can share your reflections in a community meeting with the help of these or other similar questions:

- Have you understood the sociological model?
- In what way does this model seem helpful to discern the quality of our life? (cf. ITW.24)



*Part four (ns. 28-36):*

This part contains the Chapter's endorsement (ITW.28), a succinct explanation of the Chapter's first approach to the Constitutions, that will be taken into consideration in the redaction of the study guides for reading (ITW.29-30), and an explanation of the process to be followed (ITW.32-33). The document ends with a text from St. Teresa who encourages us on the path on which we embark (ITW.34), and an exhortation to place our confidence in the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph who, united to Christ, accompany us at every step (ITW.35-36).





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