

General Definitory of the Discalced Carmelites  
Corso d'Italia, 38  
00198 Rome – Italy

Sexennium 2015-2021- Letter No. 2

Rome, September 12, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Teresian Carmel:

We greet you all fraternally at the conclusion of the second meeting of the General Definitory for this sexennium, held in Rome from September 07-12. After the first meeting held in early June, many of us returned to our provinces of origin to attend to unfinished matters, to bid goodbye to people and communities we have worked with during the past few years, and to prepare the necessary documents and materials for the new ministry entrusted to us. Likewise, we spent the summer enhancing skills in language proficiency.

Now, at the beginning of a new phase, we have finalized the composition of the new community of the Generalate and are ready to take up the issues at hand as a General Definitory. It is barely a month before the closing of the Fifth Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa of Jesus: October 15 is the date set for the conclusion of these events, although some events and celebrations will take place beyond this day. We are invited to live these final days with joy. It has been a year which has enabled us to appreciate the relevance and universality of the experience and message of St. Teresa. We have witnessed this in the many gatherings and celebrations in the different parts of the world. The sustained interest for the Centenary confirms that the current search for spirituality and for meaning in the hearts of so many people finds an adequate response in the Teresian charism.

As we conclude the Centenary, we pray especially that its fruits remain in us as members of the family of the Teresian Carmel. It is now time to move from celebration and reflection to the commitment of life. We have come to know Teresa better which makes us more aware of our roots and identity. This awareness constitutes both a question and a challenge. The question that we ask ourselves at this point is whether the Teresian message is being relevantly and concretely lived by us in our different places and cultures.

A concrete way was proposed by the Discalced Carmelite Friars at the General Chapter last May. For this sexennium, a process of reflection on our Constitutions will be introduced. This will involve taking a closer look at our legislative texts and allowing our ideal to challenge our daily lives. We need to find out if there is a consistency between the text and lived reality so we know what we have to change. In so far as the Constitutions do not express what we desire and how we should live, or to the extent that its language is not expressed in the context of the Church and society of today, updating will be needed: only in this way can they continue to be a suitable point of reference for us. On the other hand, in the measure that our attitudes and behavior do not correspond to the values expressed in the Constitutions will changes in our way of life be imperative.

We hope that this process, that aims to facilitate serious and mature dialogue in all our communities, will lead us to an honest assessment of our way of understanding and living as followers of Teresa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and allow an authentic review of life that will spur us on to a greater awareness of our identity as Teresian Carmelites. Thus one of the most crucial points of reflection in the Definitory has been this mandate received from the General Chapter. To fulfill this

in the best way possible, an international commission was designated and mandated to meet immediately after the Definitory meeting to begin the work of providing guidelines as well as materials for personal and community reflection.

Another important item we took up in the agenda during these days of deliberation was our ministry to the Order as General Definitors. Before anything else, we want to be available to accompany, to advise, and to assist the different Circumscriptions as much as possible. In this regard, we have outlined the schedule of pastoral visitations which will be made public when dates are confirmed after a dialogue with the various Superiors in every region. Likewise, we have defined the particular responsibilities and specific jurisdiction of each one in the different areas of government.

On the other hand, we have distributed the work and tasks in the Generalate, both for the Definitors and the rest of the religious who form the Community (secretaries, delegates, collaborators...) We thank those who have made themselves available and have accepted to render this generous service to the Order; we thank their respective Circumscriptions as well. In the same way, we want to express our sincere gratitude to all the religious who have worked in the Generalate after many years of selfless and efficient service, and will now return to their places of origin or head for other destinations.

The General Definitory has proceeded with the appointments necessary for the efficient running of the affairs of the Curia. In particular, the Definitory has designated and confirmed the following religious in their different capacities:

- Secretary-General, General Archivist and Secretary for the Italian language:  
*Fr. Angelo Lanfranchi (Venice);*
- Bursar-General:  
*Fr. Attilio Ghisleri (Venice);*
- Postulator-General:  
*Fr. Romano Gambalunga (Venice);*
- Procurator-General:  
*Fr. Jean-Joseph Bergara (Avignon-Aquitaine);*
- Secretary to Fr. General and Secretary-General for the Nuns:  
*Fr. Rafal Wilkowsk (Cracovia);*
- General Delegate to the OCDS and Aggregated Institutes:  
*Fr. Alzinir Debastiani (Southeast Brazil);*
- Coordinator of the Curia and Superior of the Community in the Generalate:  
*Fr. Lukasz Kansy (Varsovia);*
- Secretary-General for Communications and Secretary for the Spanish language:  
*Fr. Julio Almansa Calero (Iberica);*
- Webmaster:  
*Fr. Johny Paulose (South Kerala);* and
- Secretary for Missionary Cooperation in the Order:  
*Fr. Jerome Paluku (Congo).*

Completing the Community in the Generalate are *Fr. Antoine-Marie Leduc and Brothers Poulouse Aikareth and Simone Kim.*

The Definitory also discussed matters concerning communications and publications. Taking into account the experiences of the past sexennium, new directions and projects are being envisioned in order to continue and to improve these facilities offered from the Generalate. In this

respect, a revitalized presence on the Internet and in the social network is expected in the coming months, as well as an update of periodicals.

Another item in the agenda that concerned us is the missionary dimension of the Order. In a time characterized by profound changes in the social, cultural and religious dimensions throughout the world, the General Government desires to put itself at the service of this specific endeavor. The concept and practice of mission in our days are very different from the past. Aware of the new global context in the world, the Church and the Order, we intend to encourage and strongly support the evangelizing efforts of our spiritual family, through the Definitors and the Secretariat for Communications. Moreover, we intend to extend financial and logistical support for specific projects through the Order's Secretariat for Missionary Cooperation.

With the help of Fr Attilio, the Bursar-General, we are reviewing the financial standing of the center of the Order, with special attention to some projects that require particular supervision at this moment, such as the Institutions for Study and the various initiatives undertaken for the Fifth Centenary of the birth of St. Teresa. Although, our global financial standing is stable, the sources of revenue are decreasing.

A session of the Definitory was set aside for the Discalced Carmelite Nuns. A letter was sent by the Nuns who participated in the General Chapter in Avila. In this letter they expressed their desire to work together to formulate a formation program and grow in relationships and in communion within the family of the Teresian Carmel in the different parts of the world. We welcomed these proposals and discussed the best ways to implement them.

Finally, the Definitory issued guidelines and made specific decisions for issues presented by particular provinces, houses and religious. With the help of Fr. Jean-Joseph, the Procurator-General, we discussed particular cases concerning our religious while recognizing the need to resolve remaining irregular situations as regards absences, secularization, or departures from the Order.

We concluded the meeting, aware that within a few weeks, particularly on Sunday, October 18, during the celebration of the Synod of the Family, the Canonization of the parents of St. Therese of the Child Jesus will take place in Rome. This event is another reason to thank God who manifests His Grace in so many ways, and in this case, in a Christian marriage which was the favorable environment that nurtured many religious vocations.

The next meeting will be on December 15 this year. The Definitory accepted the invitation of Fr. Enrique Castro to travel to Israel by early December to get firsthand knowledge of the Carmelite situation in the Holy Land. This visit will help the Definitory to make the appropriate decisions needed for the consolidation of our presence and activity in the region, as well as the safeguarding of the properties belonging to the Order.

Fraternally,

Fr. Saverio Cannistra, General

Fr. Agusti Borrell

Fr. Lukasz Kansy

Fr. George Tambala

Fr. Johannes Gorantla

Fr. Daniel Chowning

Fr. Francisco Javier Mena

Fr. Mariano Agruda III