



GENERAL DEFINITORY OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES

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Dear brothers and sisters of the Teresian Carmel:

Here we are, once again, sending all of you our cordial greeting and informing you of the main topics covered and the decisions taken at the Definitory Meeting which took place in Rome from the 2nd to the 10th of September, with Fr General and the seven Definitors participating.

A central topic of our discussion these days has been the drafting of the Declaration on our Charism. In the context of the renewal programme promoted by the 2015 General Chapter, the Extraordinary Definitory held last February in Goa, India, agreed that the General Chapter of 2021 should adopt this Declaration, which will attempt to express in a concise manner and with understandable language the essential elements of the charism of our Order, taking into account the current context of society and the Church, as well as the pluralistic presence of the Order in the different regions of the world. The purpose of the Declaration is to help us all in the process of continuous renewal, which we need to keep in motion in order to respond to the mission entrusted to us by God and the Church, arising from the identity given to us in our charism.

The General Definitory has written a first draft of the Charismatic Declaration, which was revised during these days. This text will be sent to all circumscriptions so that it can be analysed and the next provincial chapters provide their assessments and suggestions. In addition, in the coming weeks it will be subject to the consideration of a few young friars from the circumscriptions of the Order (usually between the ages of 30 and 45) on different continents. With all the contributions received, the General Definitory will review the text and present it to the Extraordinary Definitory in September 2020, which will carry out a further revision of the draft in preparation for the General Chapter.

With regard to the Norms, the work of analysis and evaluation of the suggestions provided by the provinces during the stage of rereading the Constitutions continues. These were already evaluated at the Goa Extraordinary Definitory, and now, with the help of canonical experts, the material is being prepared with the proposed modifications and the arguments that support them, so that the General Chapter can take appropriate decisions.

Turning to general visitations, we received extensive information about those that have taken place in recent weeks. Thus, from the 3rd to the 15th of July, P. Daniel Chowning made the pastoral visitation of the province of Malta. The presence of the Order on this Mediterranean island dates back to 1626, when construction began in Cospicua of what would become the first church dedicated to St Teresa of Jesus. Throughout history, the province stands out for a strong missionary spirit. It is currently made up of 20 religious,

with an average age of 60 years, and has 4 houses on the island of Malta: the novitiate house, a parish, a spirituality centre and a sanctuary in honour of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. The province also serves a parish in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, where there is currently only one religious, a situation that cannot continue.

In the communities, there is deep concern for the pastoral care of the faithful. Effort is made to take care of the life of prayer and fraternity, two areas in which it is necessary to continue improving. Despite the vocational decline in the Western world, there are certain signs of hope with the presence of some aspirants, something which requires good discernment and accompaniment. Fr Daniel encouraged the friars to make Carmelite spirituality more and better known. He also recalled the desirability of good ongoing formation, as well as organizing retreats and days of recollection for the friars of the province. Due to the small number of friars, advancing age, and the scarcity of vocations, the province has applied to become a semi-province, a petition that has been accepted by the Definitory and which will be effective from the next provincial Chapter of the circumscription.

For his part, from the 1st to the 18th of August, Father Daniel Ehigie carried out a pastoral visitation of the Provincial Delegation of Malawi, which is part of the Province of Navarre. The Delegation currently has 12 friars from Malawi, 2 from Navarre, 2 from the General Delegation of the Congo, and 2 friars who are studying in Rome and Avila, as well as a bishop. The average age is 43 years. On the other hand, 25 young people are in initial formation. In Malawi there is a total of 5 communities. The house for philosophy students is in Balaka and the novitiate in Kapiri. The communities serve two parishes, a school, a spirituality centre and a house of prayer. The friars are appreciated by the local Church. In recent times, collaboration with other circumscriptions has grown, especially in the field of formation, with initiatives such as the inter-provincial novitiate or sending students to other countries. The high number of those abandoning their vocation in an invitation to strengthen formation communities and to devote more energy to discernment and to accompany candidates. Attention must also be paid to the economic situation in order to move towards self-financing.

Fr Mariano Agruda III took part in the annual meeting of the Conference of Major Superiors of East Asia and Oceania from the 2nd to the 5th of July in Bangkok. At the same time, the three-yearly meeting of professed students from East Asia and Oceania took place. A total of 35 delegates from 10 different nationalities took part in this meeting.

Subsequently, P. Mariano visited the province of Korea from the 20th of July to the 3rd of August. Christianity in Korea began in the 17th century thanks to the work of the laity; it has always had a remarkable social involvement and also has a strong martyrdom tradition. Catholics now make up 11% of the population.

The Order's presence in Korea began in 1974 through the collaboration of the provinces of Avignon-Aquitaine and Venice. The Province of Korea was established in 2009. It currently consists of 48 solemnly professed friars, 2 simply professed, 4 novices and 1 postulant, with an average age of 52 years. Twenty percent of the friars are non-clerical brothers. The province has 6 houses in Korea, 1 in the United States, 1 in mainland China and 1 inter-provincial house in Taiwan. There are currently 3 candidates from China in initial formation: 1 simply professed, 1 novice, and 1 postulant. There are 8 convents of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Korea. Membership in the Secular Carmel is quite numerous and consistent, with some 3,600 members. The characteristic areas in which the friars dedicate their work are the Secular Order communities, the desert house in Seongju, the

Carmelite Centre in Seoul, publications and pastoral work in spirituality. A group of friars is working on the interesting "China Mission" project, which we want to continue for the good of the Order.

Among the friars of Korea, the contemplative dimension of Carmelite life is particularly valued. The general Visitor pointed out ways to continue improvement in the community life with a fraternal spirit in the exercise of authority and relationships between friars. It is necessary to grow in a sense of belonging to the province and in the programming and realization of common projects. Especially important is the need to devote resources to training formators. Relations with the neighbouring circumscriptions of East Asia and Oceania should also be intensified.

Fr Johannes Gorantla presented the report on his visit to the Karnataka-Goa province which he carried out between the months of April and August, at different stages, because of the dimensions of the province and its extensive geographical presence. The province has 202 solemnly professed friars, 69 simply professed and 9 novices. The average age of those solemnly professed is around 45 years. The province has 26 houses in India, 8 in the Vicariate of Tanzania, 2 in South Africa, 8 in Canada and 3 in Italy. The communities serve 9 spirituality centres, 10 schools and 35 parishes. There are 9 monasteries of Discalced Carmelites nuns under the jurisdiction of the province in India and 1 in Tanzania. There are 22 secular Order communities with 442 members.

The Karnataka-Goa province, established in 1981, is a young province, with a lot of capacity and potential. In the last 30 years it has experienced great numerical growth, as well as a remarkable geographical expansion. The visitor noted that there is good fraternal atmosphere in the Province. There is an intense apostolic activity throughout the Province and in particular, the apostolate specific to the Order. Province has various renowned centres of Spirituality that attract religious from all over India. With their active dedication, the friars reach a very large number of people, thanks also to their publications and the use of the media. There is also a remarkable missionary spirit in the province. Ongoing formation is well taken care of. It is necessary to strengthen the fraternal life in some of the existing communities. Another aspect to attend to is initial formation, devoting enough time to the initial stages. The Definitory believes that it would be desirable to create some provincial delegations in the province, for example, for the communities of Canada, and perhaps also for some area of India, in order to facilitate the administration.

Fr Javier Mena submitted the reports sent in by the circumscriptions of Mexico and Ecuador concerning the application of the indications given them in their past pastoral visitation, as requested of all circumscriptions one year after the visitation. In this respect, we have also discussed some issues related to the follow-up after the general visitation in some other provinces (Malabar, Oklahoma, etc.).

Fr Javier also reported on the important progress that has been made in the dialogue between the Latin American circumscriptions with regard to interprovincial formation. Concrete agreements are being reached in the three CICLAs. Thus, each of them will have a novitiate and an interprovincial theological college.

As usual, the Bursar General informed the Definitory about the economic situation of the General House and some of the entities under the general government. We especially appreciate the donations received from different sources, which also allow us to respond to requests that arrive from different parts of the Order. For his part, the Procurator General gave a report on recent dealings with the Apostolic See on behalf of the Order, and together

with him we analysed the specific situation of some friars from different circumscriptions that requires particular attention.

Fr. Jérôme Paluku, Secretary for Missionary Cooperation, gave a report on the new rules of the Italian Episcopal Conference for the submission of applications for financial aid for the Third World. From now on, all projects submitted must always be approved by the General of the Order or the respective religious congregation. On the other hand, a limited number of projects have been established for each Order or Congregation. For this reason, our secretariat remains committed to coordinating the projects and helping in the preparation and presentation of the corresponding dossiers.

Other topics submitted to the attention of the General Definitory are as follows:

- We received information from Father Attilio Ghisleri, Delegate in Israel, on some aspects of the life and pastoral work of the friars of the Delegation, as well as the current state of numerous issues relating to our heritage in Israel (maintenance, works, projects, administrative management, etc.).
- We accepted the request of Karnataka-Goa Province to start a new foundation in the Archdiocese of Nagpur (Maharashtra, India).
- We accepted the request of the Province of Manjummel to start a foundation in Ipswich, in the diocese of East Anglia (England).
- We accepted the request of the Province of Central Italy (friars and Secular Carmel) to open the Cause for beatification of Gino Bartali (1914-2000), a member of the Secular Carmelites. He is well known in Italy for his great triumphs as a cyclist and his deep faith and great generosity are being discovered more and more.

Within a few months, the circumscriptions of the Order will celebrate their triennial Chapters which represent an excellent opportunity for renewal and a stimulus for the lives of the friars. As our laws remind us, Chapters should be carefully prepared, giving great importance to spiritual preparation (*Norms* 207). On this occasion, what comes to the forefront is reflection upon the Charismatic Declaration that the Order has prepared. By means of the Chapters, all circumscriptions are called to offer their cooperation so that the text can become an element of renewal in the immediate future. In the coming days the General will send a letter to all circumscriptions with some indications for the proper preparation of the Chapters.

Following standard practice, a few months after the Provincial Chapters the Extraordinary Definitory will meet. To be precise, next year's meeting will take place from August 30th to September 6th 2020, in Mexico City (Casa Lago, headquarters of the Conference of the Mexican Episcopate). There we will be welcomed by our friars of the Province of Mexico, to whom our gratitude continues to go out for their availability and dedication to the good running of the meeting.

As for the next General Chapter, we can already announce that it will be held from the 1st to the 22nd of May 2021, in the Ad Gentes Centre, run by the Congregation of the Divine Word, which is located in the town of Nemi, about 35 kilometres south of Rome (Italy).

We remind everyone that information on these and other topics of interest related to the Government and the General House, as well as other important aspects of the life of the

Order, can be followed on the website of the General Curia (www.carmelitaniscalzi.com) and on social media. It is managed by Fr. Emilio Martínez, Secretary for Information who, from this month on, will depend on the collaboration of Mr. Lorenzo Barone (a member of the Secular Order of Central Italy) as a webmaster and assistant. We fraternally thank Fr Johnny Paulose, until a few weeks ago a member of the General House community, for his effective service as a webmaster during these last years and wish him a good return to his province of South Kerala.

As our meeting draws to a close, we entrust the whole Order, friars, nuns, and lay people to the intercession of St Teresa of Jesus, whose feast we will celebrate in a few weeks' time. May she accompany us and help us in the desire to live in our time the charism that she received and transmitted.

Fraternally,

Fr Saverio Cannistrà, General
Fr Agustí Borrell
Fr Łukasz Kansy
Fr Johannes Gorantla
Fr Daniel Chowning
Fr Francisco Javier Mena
Fr Mariano Agruda III
Fr Daniel Ehigie