



GENERAL DEFINITORY OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES

Corso d'Italia, 38

00198 Roma – Italia

SEXENNium 2021-2027 – LETTER N° 1

Rome, October 11, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Teresian Carmel:

We, the members of the new General Definitory of the Order, greet you at the beginning of the sexennium that just began. A few weeks ago, the General Chapter was finally held in Rome from August 30 to September 14. The Chapter meeting was an experience of communion, dialogue, and discernment which served to take the pulse of the life of the Order with its lights and shadows, its difficulties and its hopes. In the Chapter we were able to experience the richness of diversity, not always easy to combine with unity. We left the assembly with the hope and commitment of all to respond with strong determination to the call of the Lord to be true Discalced Carmelites today. Some of the topics that the Chapter dealt with in more detail were the Declaration on the Charism of the Teresian Carmel, the revision of some of the Norms and the initial and ongoing formation.

The Definitory elected by the General Chapter is formed by the Superior General, Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle (Iberian Province), and eight General Definitors: Agustí Borrell Viader (Iberian Province), Pius James D'Souza (Karnataka-Goa), Philbert Namphande (Navarre, Provincial Delegation of Malawi), Roberto Maria Pirastu (Semiprovince of Austria), Christianus Surinono (Commissariat of Indonesia), Martín Martínez Larios (Mexico), Christophe Marie Baudouin (Paris), Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem (Iberian, Provincial Delegation of West Africa).

After a first initial contact at the end of the Chapter, the Definitory held its first formal meeting October 6-9 at the General House. Philbert and Christianus were able to participate in the meeting via the Internet, while still awaiting the necessary visas to travel to Italy. We hope they will be able to be present at the next meeting which is scheduled to begin on December 6. During these days we had a first exchange of impressions and ideas and we started to plan the activities of the sexennium. First of all, we identified the priority objectives for this new stage in the life of the Order based on the reflections and decisions of the General Chapter which are largely contained in the Chapter document "Let Us Walk Together, Lord." (This document, like other important Chapter materials, can be consulted on the Order's website: www.carmelitaniscalzi.com).

One of the main goals of the sexennium is to strengthen the sense of belonging to the same family, the Teresian Carmel, of which God has called us to be part. Therefore, we will try to foster everything that nourishes communion and fraternity within the Order. In this sense, the Declaration on the Charism of the Teresian Carmel officially approved by the General Chapter, which we are now called to know, assimilate, and apply, should be of great help. We will search for the adequate means so that this important document will be a source of renewal and our life will really correspond to what God expects from us today as Discalced Carmelites at the service of the Church and humanity.

At the present time, what is especially important is formation, both initial and ongoing. Formation is a personal and communitarian task which must continue throughout life. Of course, the first stages of formation are of particular importance and must be given special attention. To this end, preferential attention should be given to the various aspects necessary for a good formation: discernment of vocations, establishment of formation communities, preparation of formators, etc. The General Chapter asked that the *Ratio Formationis* be revised so that it may continue to be an inspirational guide for the Order.

Other objectives that will be developed will be youth ministry and the celebration of the anniversaries of our Saints, among which are the fourth centenary of the canonization of Teresa of Jesus (2022), the 150th anniversary of the birth of Thérèse of the Child Jesus (2023) and the first centenary of her canonization (2025), the third centenary of the canonization of John of the Cross, and the first centenary of his doctorate (2026).

One of the tasks usually entrusted to the Definitors is the undertaking, in the name of the General, of pastoral visitations to the various circumscriptions of the Order. We have discussed how to carry them out and have drawn up a provisional distribution of those that will be entrusted to each one, as well as a possible calendar. Each one of the Definitors will have a specific region entrusted to him, although he will be able to visit circumscriptions in other territories. On the other hand, in some cases the visitation will be done in collaboration between two Definitors. In addition, whenever possible, the General will try to be present at the final part of the visitation, or at some point during the visitation.

On the other hand, each of the Definitors will be assigned to a specific area of work, always in coordination with the General and the Definitory. The distribution is: Agustí (Vicar General and moderator of the Curia; cultural centers, culture and ongoing formation), Pius (Secular Carmelites), Philbert (Discalced Carmelite nuns), Roberto Maria (finances and communication), Christianus (missions), Martin (initial formation), Christophe-Marie (youth ministry; ecology and creation), Jean Baptiste (initial formation and youth ministry).

Regarding the members of the General Curia whose appointment depends on the Definitory and the General, we have renewed the appointments currently in place with the possibility that some changes may be considered at a later date. We noted the advisability of continuing to seek collaborators for the General House and its various sections so that the General Government can offer an effective service. In this sense, we ask that the availability of friars and circumscriptions to collaborate with the needs of the Order not diminish.

In the case of the Delegate for the Secular Order and affiliated institutes, Fr. Alzinir Debastiani has completed his term of service in this office. We sincerely thank him for the dedication with which he has rendered a precious and effective service during these past years. In his place, we have appointed Fr. Ramiro Casale (Province of California-Arizona), who will assume his new responsibilities in the next few days.

We also made some appointments for positions that had completed their triennial term. For the permanent community of the Teresianum in Rome, we have appointed Fr. Albert Wach as Superior, Fr. Innocent Hakizimana as first councilor, and Fr. Gianni Evangelisti as bursar; for the community of specialization (Seminarium Missionum), we have appointed Fr. Johannes Gorantla as Superior.

Since two of the Definitors elected by the General Chapter were active Provincials, the General Definitory, after consultation with the respective Provincial Councils (cf. Constitutions 198), has appointed Fr. George Santhumayor as Provincial of Karnataka-Goa and Fr. Guillaume Dehorter as Provincial of Paris.

We are grateful to the General Treasurer for the initial information he gave us on the economic situation and on practical questions related to the economic administration of the centers and entities dependent on the General Government. We also thank the Procurator

General for the information on the work entrusted to him and on some of the issues that need to be dealt with by the Vatican dicasteries.

The Definitory also dealt with concrete questions on which a decision was required. We approved the collaboration agreements between the Provinces of Iberia and Avignon-Aquitaine (for Senegal), and between the Provinces of Central Italy and Karnataka-Goa, as well as between the Commissariats of Sicily and Madagascar. We also granted permission for works in some houses of the Iberian Province. We also expressed our support for the request of the French bishops to study the possibility of an equipollent canonization (without the need for a miracle) for the martyrs of Compiègne.

At the end of the first meeting of the new General Definitory, we renew our desire and our commitment to live at the service of the whole Order—friars, nuns and laity—in the sincere recognition of our littleness and trusting in the closeness of all of you and in your prayer to the Lord so that he may help us to always seek his will and the good of the whole family of the Teresian Carmel.

As we approach the feast of our mother Teresa of Jesus, we ask her to accompany us with her intercession to be in our time faithful and creative followers of the lifestyle that she began. With her, and like her, may we always be able to say, “Let us walk together, Lord!”

Fraternally,

P. Miguel Márquez Calle, General

P. Agustí Borrell

P. Pius James D’Souza

P. Philbert Namphande

P. Roberto Maria Pirastu

P. Christianus Surinono

P. Martín Martínez Larios

P. Christophe Marie Baudouin

P. Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem