



## Gratitude

**D**ear Brothers and sisters!  
It is the end of the year, it is Advent time and soon it is Christmas!

If I was to play a “*word association*” game with each of you and asked you to choose just one word for this season, my guess is that “*gratitude*” would be the word that many would select.

The word gratitude may seem meaningless to those struggling for life... And the COVID19 pandemic has worsened the situation... For what and to whom to pay gratitude then!

At the OCD Missionary Cooperation Office as well as at the Centre of the Discalced Carmelite Order, the strength of our interventions to support social and pastoral actions of our missions in various parts of the world is precisely because of the goodness and the backing from many of you. How lucky and thankful are many of our missionaries because God has put you on our way to support them! Thanks a million and may the Good Lord continue to grant all your hearts’ desires.

2021 was “*one year-long Advent*” for the whole world in General, and for the OCD Missionary Cooperation Office

in particular, as everyone awaits to see when the COVID19 pandemic will end. If not all of us, many of us have been nervous, frustrated, impatient and worried ... This end of the year, this Advent season and the forth coming Christmastide invite us all to look ahead with hope and thanks, and above all else with a deep sense of commitment to support each other in our efforts to cross over this dramatic time.

The generosity of each one of us is the concrete way in which the Emmanuel, the Greatest Gift of God to humanity, is born and reaches out to those who, during this time, cannot celebrate Christmas!

To all of you who carry our missionaries and their daily sorrows in your prayers; to all of you who promote missionary needs in your families, to your friends and acquaintances; and to all of you who financially contribute to support our mission projects: we are very grateful . Without you we can do nothing but with you we can do everything. May the Lord bless you!

*The OCD Missionary Cooperation Office*

# NEWS FROM BELORUSSIA

**T**he friars of our Belorussian Vicariate spent the 20 November, the feast day of St. Raphael Kalinowski, on a Spiritual Retreat at Miadziel. Monsignor Aleh Butkevich, President of the Belorussian Episcopal Conference and Bishop of the Diocese of Vitebsk, conducted the Retreat. He encouraged the friars to be dedicated pastors of the people of God in Belorussia during these difficult times

and to live demanding and evangelical religious lives.

Our Carmelite Secular Order is developing well in the country. After a short Retreat, on Saturday, 20 November, again in Miadziel, the OCDS community of Minsk joined in celebration as Mrs. Anna Lutskaya pronounced her promises during Mass. Fr. Peter Frostega, Vicar of the Discalced Carmelites in Belorussia, presided at the celebration.

## MONSIGNOR CESAR ESSAYAN, LATIN APOSTOLIC VICAR IN LEBANON MEETS LEBANESE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS FOR THE SYNOD

Saturday 20 November 2021

**M**ay this Synod be lived in the Spirit! We are forever needful of God's renewing breath that frees us from all shutdowns, restores life to what was dead, tears apart chains and dispenses joy. It leads us towards what God wills, not towards what our own ideas and personal tastes would entice us. We must invoke the Spirit more frequently and more intensely, listen to him in humility, walking together, as the

Lord wishes, with docility and courage. In this way we will not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by delusion in the synodal experience, with prophecy being minimized and everything reduced to sterile discussion.

Come, O Spirit of Love, open our hearts to listen. Come, Spirit of holiness, Creator, renew the faithful people of God and, through them, renew the face of the earth.

## A SPACE FOR PRAYER INAUGURATED IN BENONI (SOUTH AFRICA)

**C**armelite friars from the Karnataka-Goa Province have constructed a Prayer Garden in the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Benoni, South Africa. The garden was blessed by Archbishop Buti Thagale of Johannesburg on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, the Solemnity of Christ the King. During the celebration of Mass, the Archbishop thanked all those responsible for the creation of such a beautiful garden where people can come to meet God. The

site has also been envisaged as a place for healing. Father Arvin Tauro, Superior and Parish Priest, thanked everybody who had contributed to making the dream of a Prayer Garden become an actual reality. The Archbishop also blessed the tabernacle in the chapel of the Spirituality Centre. All the Indian Carmelite missionaries, Frs. Mari Joe, Boniface D'Souza, John D'Souza, Rayan Pais and Antony Stephen were able to take part in the celebration.

## 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE PARISH OF ST. DOMINIC De GUZMAN IN SANTA CRUZ, TENERIFE (SPAIN)

**C**armelites of the Iberian Province celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Parish of St. Dominic Guzman in Santa Cruz, Tenerife (the Canary Islands), on Sunday 21 November. Monsignor Bernardo Alvarez Alfonso presided at the Mass for the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe. The Provincial Council was able to make use of the occasion to hold its ordinary Council meeting at the same time in our convent at Santa Cruz. This allowed the

Council Members to share in the special festivities. It was a joyous occasion for everybody. It was a day to recall the past, to celebrate the present and look forward to the future with confidence. A small model of the parish locales, illuminated and designed in the smallest detail, was placed under the altar of the parish church. A plaque simply read: "Thank You". It is a thanksgiving that every individual makes to God, to His Son (King of the Universe),

while abandoning themselves in the hands of the Spirit. May these words of St. Teresa of Jesus be the true spirit that guides our church of St. Dominic on the

waters of this life: “Now we are beginning. Let us strive to advance always from good to better” (Foundations 29,32).

## CARMELITE NUNS OF TOLENTINO (ITALY): BLESSING AS WORK BEGINS

**O**n December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Nuns of Tolentino, had the blessing, not of the first stone of their future convent, but rather of its first plank of wood. It had happened, that as Mass began on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6,5 had practically razed to the ground the original monastery of the Nuns. That same evening, the Nuns departed from Tolentino. They were first accommodated by the Carmelite Nuns in Fano and later, in July 2017, when they had transferred to Cascia, they took up residence in an independent house provided by Augustinian sisters. At the

beginning of 2017 a friend had suggested that their original Tolentino monastery should be totally demolished and a new wooden structure constructed. Little by little this idea came to be accepted as the most attractive one, taking into consideration the threat of further earthquakes, the time that would be saved in building and respect for the surrounding ambient and its resources. Thus, December 11<sup>th</sup> became a day of blessing for the commencement of labour and a special occasion of joy and of a kind of return to a homeland. We entrust to the Lord our good Sisters and the project of their new monastery.

## 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Carmel of Quezon City (Philippines)

**T**he Carmel of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus celebrated its 95<sup>th</sup> foundation anniversary last November 24, 2021. His Grace, the Most Reverend Charles J. Brown, D.D., Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, led the Thanksgiving Mass, together with His Excellency, the Most Reverend

Honesto F. Ongtioco, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Cubao, and concelebrated by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers. The Carmel of Thérèse of Lisieux was established in 1926 in the Magdalena Estates (New Manila). However, the history of the Discalced Carmelites in the Philippines starts in 1923, with

the arrival of four French nuns from Hue, Vietnam, to the shores of Jaro, Iloilo. There, they established the first Philippine Discalced Carmelite Monastery. After the old convent sustain some damage after World War II (1938-1945), the present chapel and convent were constructed in the 1950s, with

donations from many of the residents of New Manila.

As one of the patron saints of the Philippines, Saint Thérèse has a strong devotional following here, and her relics have been brought over for a pilgrimage four times.

## FR. ROMULO CUARTAS LONDONO, OCD, DIES AGED 73

**F**r. Romulo Cuartas Londono (1948-2021) was originally from Colombia. He entered the Discalced Carmelite Order on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1969 and was ordained a priest July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1977. In that same year he got a Licence in Pastoral Theology at the Pontifical University Javeriana (Bogota) and, in 2004, obtained a Doctorate in Spiritual Theology at Comillas Pontifical University (Madrid). His thesis was entitled “The Trinitarian Spirituality of St. Teresa of Jesus”. In

2019 he celebrated 52 years of religious Profession after a full life as: Professor, Parish Priest, Provincial, President of the Conference of Religious in Colombia, Author of numerous studies on Carmelite Spirituality and one of the principal organizers of CITEs, serving as its Vice-director from 2004.

During a period of convalescence, he died as a result of a fall on December 21<sup>st</sup>. His funeral was celebrated on Christmas Eve. May the good Lord receive Fr. Romulo into His Mercy.