



## Tanzania: Ruby Jubilee of Carmelite Vicariate in Tanzania

**O**n September 17, 2023, the Vicariate of Tanzania celebrated its Ruby Jubilee at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Kihonda, a day marked by profound spiritual significance and communal rejoicing. The celebratory mass was presided over by his Excellence Archbishop Nyaisonga, with the presence of Archbishop Tambala, Fr. Silvestre the Provincial, Fr. Praveen the Regional Vicar, and the Carmelite friars, Sisters, and faithful.

The Carmelite friars, Sisters, and the faithful, united in joyful worship and

thanksgiving, commemorating forty years of dedicated service and unwavering faith within the Vicariate of Tanzania. The mass was a spiritual embodiment of unity, gratitude.

The Ruby Jubilee Celebration stands as a testament to the enduring commitment of the Vicariate of Tanzania to its mission, fostering a deep sense of unity, faith, and gratitude. As we look forward to continuing this journey of devotion and service, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the success of this significant event.

## Ivory Coast: inauguration of the scholastic year

**O**n Saturday, September 16, 2023, the Catholic College of the Discalced Carmelite friars in Abidjan inaugurated the school year by entrusting it to the Lord. The Mass was presided over by Father Ambroise Marie Fare, director of the College. All the people involved in the school's educational system were present (administrative and technical staff, teachers, students, parents, bus drivers, etc.)

On this occasion, parents had the oppor-

tunity to learn about the functioning of the school and its academic and disciplinary programs for the 2023-2024 school year. Afterwards, they were invited to visit the school and talk individually with members of the administration and teachers about their children and various school subjects. In turn, the teaching and administrative staff were able to give parents some advice on how to accompany and supervise their children at home.

# 2023 Extraordinary Definitory of the Discalced Carmelites

**Lisieux (France)**  
**28<sup>th</sup> of August to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September**

**August 28**

**T**he Extraordinary Definitory of Lisieux (France) involved about 80 friars from the 5 continents. It opened with Mass at 6.30 a.m., at which presided our Father General. In his homily, Father Miguel posed the question why were we gathered here? First of all to celebrate the Lord's mercy, the joy of our vocation, to celebrate it in a cenacle of prayer with our Mother, the Virgin Mary, as fellow Carmelites who want to walk together. We are here to drink from a deep well, to drink and then give a drink to others.

At 9 a.m., Father General opened the working sessions by taking stock of the activities of the General Government, after which he presented the program of the week: presentation of the Circumscriptions; proposal to simplify the types of Circumscriptions; relations and collaboration between the circumscriptions; dialogue with Carmelite bishops;

mission of the Order; initial formation. At the beginning of the afternoon, after the presentation of the circumscriptions, Father Agustí Borrell, Vicar General, presented the different types of circumscriptions that exist today (Province, Semi-Province, Commissariat, General Delegation, Provincial Delegation, Regional Vicariate), from the point of view of our Constitutions and our practice. Faced with this multiplication of denominations, with unclear juridical contours, the General Definitory proposes a simplification of the circumscriptions, that is, a reduction from 6 to 3 types. In fact: Province, Commissariat and Provincial Delegation (in other words: an autonomous circumscription, one dependent on the Generalate and one dependent on a Province). This proposal was discussed in the working groups and in the plenary assembly.

## August 29

Last year's Provincial Chapters were invited to reflect on the restructuring of the Order on the basis of 12 questions sent by the General Definitory. Their reflection had to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their circumscriptions, examine the possibility of new collaborations and how to achieve them. Father Roberto Maria Pirastu summarized the responses received to the questionnaire sent to the various circumscriptions a few months ago. Father Pius James D'Souza then addressed the more specific theme of collaboration between Provinces. Starting from the definition of what a Province is, he summarized the practice of the Order in the last 30 years, finally recalling the decisions of the Extraordinary Definitory of Ariccia (Italy, 2017) and the regularizations and new collaborations born since then. Today, in hindsight, an evaluation of the collaborations between the Provinces can be made. Although the fruits are evident, there are still some weaknesses

that need to be corrected, in particular: the type of cooperation we want and the issue of finance. A proposal for a new collaboration agreement was presented to the assembly.

In the second half of the morning, they met in work groups to discuss the limitation to 3 of the types of circumscriptions of the Order (Province, Commissariat, Regional Vicariate) as well as interprovincial collaboration.

At the beginning of the afternoon, the various work groups presented their contributions, followed by a period of free discussion in the assembly. The issues of restructuring and collaboration are not simple, neither for growing circumscriptions nor for those in difficulty. The question of the criteria for discernment was raised regularly. All this refers to more fundamental questions such as the vow of obedience, the relationship with authority, the formation of superiors, the future of the Order, our vocation and mission, but also our fears and our hopes.

## August 30

The day was dedicated to dialogue with our Carmelite brother bishops. Since the Mass (at 11 am) was celebrated in the monastery of the Carmelite nuns in Lisieux, with our sisters, the morning was dedicated only to listening.

Eight of them were able to come to be with us:

- Cardinal Anders Arborelius, Bishop of Stockholm (Sweden).
- Mons. Anibal Nieto Guerra, Bishop of San Jacinto (Ecuador)

- Mons. Braulio Sáez Garcia, Bishop of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia)
- Mons. George Desmond Tambala, Bishop of Lilongwe (Malawi)
- Mons. Greg Homeming, Bishop of Lismore (Australia)
- Mons. Marie Fabien Raharilambonina, Bishop of Morondava (Madagascar)
- Mons. Ángel Zapata Bances, Bishop of Chimbote (Peru)
- Mons. Silvio José Báez, Bishop of Managua (Nicaragua);
- Mons. Oswaldo Escobar, Bishop of Chalatenango (El Salvador).

They introduced us to their respective dioceses, then told us how they became bishops, how they lived it then and how they live it today. What they all had in common was their deep attachment to the Order. Although the Church has called them to other missions, their hearts remain in Carmel..

At 11.15 a.m. we all gathered at the Carmel of Lisieux to celebrate the Eucharist

with our Discalced Carmelite sisters. Cardinal Anders Arborelius presided and delivered the homily. It was a moment of grace to meet and pray together, confreres and sisters, in the Carmel of Lisieux, under the benevolent gaze of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.

In the afternoon, we listened to what our brother bishops wished to say to the Order, based on their experience as bishops. Among the points raised were the following: learning to become more prophetic in our testimony of life; to be witnesses of the loving presence of God, but real and not virtual presences; learn to listen and to dialogue effectively with our Carmelite sisters; face reality with hope and to love our Carmelite charism; refocus on our spiritual tradition to offer it to the world; live a truly fraternal life; Etc. Afterwards, we had a moment of free exchange between the friars of the assembly.

## August 31

**T**his day was dedicated to visiting the places where Therese lived. For some of us it was the first time. We started from the Carmelite Monastery: the museum dedicated to young Therese, but above all we had the grace of being able to enter and see the places (choir, refectory, infirmary,

garden) marked by the ever-living presence of Therese; the Cathedral of Saint-Pierre (parish of the Martin family); Les Buissonnets. After the guided tour of the Basilica of Lisieux, we celebrated the Eucharist there. This was presided over by Father Emmanuel Schwab, the new rector of the Basilica.

## September 1

Two important topics were addressed: the mission of the Order and initial formation.

Father Christianus Surinono, Definitor, after presenting the contemplative dimension of the Order, talked about the mission *ad gentes* of the Order. The different countries in which the Order is present have in fact a multiculturalism and a variety of apostolates, which influences our way of living the Carmelite charism. But this variety of apostolates must always be marked by a sense of belonging to the Order. The *Declaration on the Teresian Carmelite charism* offers us some elements of discernment to help the choices of Provinces and Communities.

Father Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem dealt with formation and the *Vademecum on formation* (which can be found on the Order's website). Father Martin Martínez Larios then presented the process of revising our *Ratio Istitutionis*. Written 30 years ago, today it manifests its limitations and weaknesses, which can be seen in the circumscriptions at the level of formation. In recent months, the Commission has prepared a questionnaire which was sent to the circumscriptions, which then collected the replies and summarised them. Next October, the members of the Commission will meet in Rome to work on the draft of a first text (which will then be sent to the circumscriptions).

## September 2

The last day of the meeting of the Extraordinary Definitory. The day was dedicated to giving information about everything that the General Government puts at the service of the Provinces.

The Procurator General, Fr. Juan David Noguera, explained to us the different procedures and the way in which difficult cases are handled. The presentation was a bit "technical". Father General spoke about the Discalced Carmelite nuns and the process of revising their *Constitutions* (1991). This work was requested by the Dicastery for Religious, especially after the publication of *Cor*

*Orans*. There are just under 10,000 nuns in the world. Currently, all communities are working on their *Constitutions* and on the questions sent by the Generalate. In April 2024 a meeting of Carmelite Nuns from all over the world will be held in Italy. Father General then spoke about the OCDS. It has about 29,000 members worldwide and is very much alive. Today it is reaching a certain maturity and is increasingly autonomous, also from an intellectual point of view. The General Bursar, Father Paolo De Carli, structured his intervention in 3 parts: the principles of good economic management (responsibility, transpar-

ency, trust); the budget of the Generalate; the relationship with the Provinces. Fathers Angelo Lanfranchi and José Pereira presented all the online resources that everyone can access, in particular the website of the Order and DigiCarmel: how they work and what can be found on them.

At the beginning of the afternoon, the friars met again in language groups to discuss the proposals of the General Definitory and then to make specific proposals/suggestions on how to restructure the Order. The results of these discussions were then presented to the assembly. Father Fabio Silvestri, who

was the moderator of the discussions during the week, then made a summary of all the work done in these days. This summary is available on our website:

<https://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/documenti/definitorio-generale/definitorio-straordinario-di-lisieux-28-agosto-2-settembre-2023/>

The Extraordinary Definitory concluded with a talk by Father General, who thanked everyone for the sincere and constructive exchanges we have had in this time of grace lived together as an Order. The General Definitory will now continue its work and implement what was decided in Lisieux.