



SUPERIOR GENERAL OF DISCALCED CARMELITES
CORSO D'ITALIA, 38 - 00198 ROMA

Rome, July 16, 2025

Stella Maris, Star of the Sea,
A peace disarmed and disarming

Dear brothers and sisters of the whole Carmelite family,
Discalced Carmelite Sisters, Friars and OCDS,
Friends and members of the affiliated Institutes,

On this beautiful feast of our Mother and Sister, Saint Mary of Mount Carmel, it gives me much pleasure to address you all to congratulate you and give thanks to God for the gift of our vocation.

On this solemn day, under the mantel of Mary, we are united especially to all of you who are living in situations of war, deprivation of liberty, danger, crisis, sickness or solitude. Also to those who, for various reasons have left the Order as an institution. Mary continues to take care of each one of you, always gifting you a new "Yes".

In the heart and womb of Mary, *Stella Maris*, we receive the gift of a dawn of confidence and an unimagined future. I would like to use this day to give thanks to everyone for the enthusiasm and the beautiful feedback on the drive to revitalize Marian life, by which we have invited the whole Order to renew our hope with Mary in Jesus. Throughout this path, we have had the profound conviction that Mary will give birth to the Carmel that her Son is hoping for from us. It's not the Carmel we dream of, desire or want.

I am writing this letter to you from Lisieux in the chapel of Saint Therese, where I can hear the gurgle of the river running along the wall of Therese's Carmel. In this chapel of the *Hermitage*, there is a beautiful and symbolic tabernacle-shrine within the silhouette of the Virgin of the Smile, just at the height of her womb. The Carmel is in the womb of Mary, as this tabernacle is, as Jesus was. She will give birth to us, and will give us light. I have a lot of confidence in this prayer with Mary and with Saint Joseph, in whom I dream that the Carmel will confront the impossible with a humble and daring heart. During those days, I prayed there for the whole of Carmel.

I share with you the litany that sprang up spontaneously from within me. I invite you to complete it with the invocation and experience that Mary resonates within you:

Holy Mary of good hope

Mary, with Hope in her womb, set off on her path, pilgrim of faith. Perhaps, this is the best icon of contemplation. Mary is carrying within her the mystery of a God incarnate, who becomes weakness and vulnerability. Moving fast, with her heart alert and in love with the tiny and infinite God within her, she walks to serve her cousin Elizabeth. From the beginning, the first hermits expelled from the Holy Land had to go out, to travel and to discover the real Mount Carmel within themselves and in each place, in each moment of history. I invite you to take a step forward and not to remain in the ashes of the past, but to revive the fire of the present.

Holy Mary of disarmed and disarming peace

Our Pope Leo has invited us to cultivate a disarmed and disarming peace. We want to be 'disarmed', unencumbered, humble and persevering and to fight disarmed of ourselves, with passion, to construct peace, starting with our own community, with the brothers and sisters with whom we live. Without this surrender and 'disarmed' heart, neither dialogue nor fraternity is possible. Mary legitimizes and lays the foundation for this Peace in each one of us, healing the inner wounds of past wars and battles. Only disarmed and in confidence will we face what is to come.

Holy Mary of Tears

Mary awakes in us the tears and weeping for injustice and war, for the cruel conflicts of our time, transforming righteous indignation and impotence into the struggle for the transformation of our world. She is not a mother who leaves us in the tranquility of indifference and apathetic comfort. She infuses the fire and passion of brothers who listen to the cry of those who suffer. O Mary, may our heart be awakened by the cries of the afflicted and may they burn with zeal for peace, even at the risk of our lives.

Holy Mary of the bridges

Mary always builds with her maternal presence a bridge between brothers, between nations, between charisms, between ideas and cultures. On various occasions, the Pope has invited us to build bridges: bridges that overcome confrontation and are the first step towards reconciliation and acceptance of the other; a bridge constructed as a metaphor of encounter that breaks the polarization that is growing in our world. In the Carmel, since the times of Teresa and John of the Cross, we are haunted by the danger of considering ourselves on the right side, of being right, of judging the other, of believing that I have the correct interpretation of the charism. . . Saint Mary of the bridges prevents us from sinking in the water of our proud self-sufficiency.

Holy Mary of everyday life

Mary, Mother and Sister of the Carmelites, teaches us the contemplative life in the ordinary and mundane everyday life, in the mysticism of what does not shine and what does not dazzle, the spirituality of ordinary things, made without the desire to be seen or recognized, "*to do what is of no value, yet will not be praised*" (Julian Marias). We need to cultivate a taste for detail and free acts, with no compensation expected, and to take care of the shared house so that everyone feels at home.

Holy Mary of dialogue and listening

May Mary, the woman of listening who attentively hears the life that thrums within, the woman of silences and questions, of words that rise from a sincere and grateful heart, foster in us the dialogue that opens up to learn and understand the truth of the other. O Mary, educate us in the dialogue that is openness and discovery, receptivity and the *parresia* (freedom of speech), docility and offering.

Holy Mary of respite and rest

Mary teaches us to rest, to take care of ourselves in order to take care of others, to rest and let ourselves rest, with a rhythm that is not hasty or accelerated, but one of the quality of life and presence. Mary animates in us the breath of the Spirit, who rhythms our daily movements and helps us to savour our life. Only by resting can we work. Mary reminds us of the thrum of the presence that dwells within us, without letting us fall into stressful dispersion. You help us to review and reorganize personally and communally the inertia that does not allow us to drink in and savour the present.

Holy Mary of the way when there is no way

'In the deserts of the heart cool springs arise' (Roger of Taizé). Mary is the mother of hope in the seeming finales of history, and awaits an astonishing resurrection on the Holy Saturday of

history. In so many non-ways of life, Mary takes us by the hand and leads us, like her children, opening pathways that were not traced on the maps of the wisest explorers. She brings to light a path in the Night of history, a path in the dead-end roads and a well in the midst of failure. *Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea. She will teach us, also in so many situations of Carmels in extreme fragility and others that are closing, to be the seed that is buried, in order to give in its own time the fruit that God wishes.

Holy Mary of humility and daring

Saint Mary of Mount Carmel reminds us that only the humble are the truly courageous in the adventure of giving their lives: humility and courage, simplicity and daring.

Holy Mary of the invisible shoots

Faced with the threat of a negative view of the present, Mary gives us her positive view, knowing the beyond and after that thrums within her Son, Lord of history and of the future. Mary signals, on the old trunk of the Carmel, the shoots of grace and of beginning. She cures our negative view and makes us face reality, without idealizing it or denying it, showing us in each moment, the presence of God who wants to be born. The faith of Mary is always fecundity and the door of hope to what God wants. She invites us to bless the shoots that are already appearing in each person and in each community.

I invite you to add your own litanies, so that we may invoke Mary together.

We also present to you the results of the survey that we made throughout the Order, which are like a radiography of our Marian sentiment. My heartfelt thanks go to the brothers of the Fatima team for all the precious work they have accomplished with such dedication and enthusiasm.

Finally, I would like to announce the opening of a Marian blog. It will collect everything concerning the Virgin Mary and Carmel, and it will be available via the link <https://maristellacarmel.com/>. The blog will initially have publications in five languages. But there is the possibility of adding others if there are volunteers available to translate and edit the corresponding contents.

A happy feast day, dear brothers and sisters.
To all, I send my embrace and blessing.

Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle
Superior General