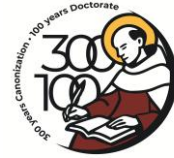




GENERAL DEFINITORY  
OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES  
Corso d'Italia, 38  
00198 Rome – Italy



Saint John  
of the Cross  
2026

## 2021 – 2027 Sexennium – Letter number 18

Rome, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025

My dear Brothers and Sisters in the Teresian Carmel:

The General Definitory met in Rome from 1<sup>st</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December to discuss matters concerning the life of the Order, with the desire to respond as best as possible to the mission entrusted to us of accompanying and animating the Carmelite family present in all parts of the world.

We shared information among ourselves and the impressions brought back from our pastoral visits which took place some weeks ago, and of the other encounters in which we participated, and now we would like to inform you of the most important themes that were the object of our recent discussions.

### Priority Themes

In the midst of many specific questions that we are concerned with, we try to prioritise the more important themes of this sexennium. Standing out among them is the commitment to deepen more each day our understanding of our charism and the way we live it, in harmony with the present age, and in the various places in the world where we are to be found. The *Declaration on our charism* from the last General Chapter is a valuable reference point in this area, and it is encouraging to see that in some places members of the Order are studying this *Declaration*.

We feel that one priority is the daily need to dedicate more and more resources to initial formation. What is important here for the most part is the quality of our lives and the service we give to the Church as Carmelites in the immediate future. In this regard, the important work of reworking the *Ratio institutionis* is to be continued, with the intention of having it ready for the extraordinary Definitory next September.

With regards to youth work, we have gathered the names of a good number of our friars from different parts of the world who will form an international commission to animate and coordinate this work with young people. We are contacting them in order to define the composition of the group, its functions and its *modus operandi*.

We are arriving at the end of the three years dedicated to St Therese of the Child Jesus and about to begin a year on St John of the Cross, on the occasion of the third centenary of his canonization (27<sup>th</sup> December 1726) and the first centenary of his being declared a Doctor of

the Church (24<sup>th</sup> August 1926). The year of St John will open in Segovia from 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December, with various celebrations at which Father General will preside or concelebrate. In a few day's time we will send you the material for the communal reading of St John's texts. Soon afterwards, we will let you know the programme of the International Congress organised by the Teresianum and CITES, which will be celebrated in Rome and Avila 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Well-known specialists on St John of the Cross and on mysticism will be participating in this event. The Iberian Province, for its part, has organised various religious and cultural events in those places connected with St John.

Regarding the Marian dimension of our lives we record that in the blog [www.maristellacarmel.com](http://www.maristellacarmel.com) managed from Fatima, there is to be found material and information in different languages on the Marian life of the Order. We invite you to consult it and subscribe to the newsletter to receive periodically the news that is going to be published.

## **Pastoral Visits**

The Definitory has analysed the reports by the Definitors following their pastoral visitations made in recent weeks. We selected the most important points and others from the findings and proposals approved by the Definitory.

### *Iberian*

The Definitors Christianus Surinono and Martin Martinez made the visit to the Iberian Province from 26<sup>th</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> November. Father General took part in the concluding assembly and in a celebration which took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November in Duruelo where the friars began. The Province was created in 2014 by the fusion of five old Provinces. It comprises of 231 solemnly professed friars, together with some in formation (students, novices, postulants and aspirants). There are 30 communities in Spain, the others are in Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay and West Africa (Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Togo).

The average age the Iberian Province in Spain is high (71) with a reduced number of young men entering. The communities consist of parishes, public churches, shrines, centres of spirituality, colleges, centres of formation, one desert and two residencies for older friars.

The Discalced Carmelite nuns (1991) number approximately 643 in 57 monasteries. They are going through a period of reduction in vocations and closure of convents. At the same time, there is a similar number of nuns who follow the 1990 Constitutions. There are around forty communities of the Secular Order (OCDS). They are making efforts to renew and have a long tradition as Carmelites.

Outstanding among the strengths of the Iberian Province are the personal witness and fraternal life of its members, the preservation of the teresian-sanjuanista life style, the process of unification as a model of orderly restructuring, finances managed with great transparency and professional advice, and the many and varied apostolic activities (pastoral, education, publishing, spiritual). Initial formation is inter-provincial and an Iberian *Ratio* for formation has been worked on.

The principal challenges of the Province we can point out are aging and the shortage of vocations, the need for a long term presence map, the promotion of an authentic multicultural community life, rising above local dynamics, and a strengthening of the work with young and with vocations, with a greater presence in social media, continuing formation and the specialization in studies on St Teresa and St John of the Cross. It has become necessary to resume the task of personal and provincial restructuring, adopting attitudes of on-going renewal and freedom of ideas to promote what gives life today to the Province.

Among the recommendations made at the end of the visit were that each area (government, finance, fraternal life, apostolate, formation), adopts synodality, transparency, good communication and interprovincial collaboration (especially with Navarre and Portugal). We also recommended intensifying the communion with our Discalced Carmelite nuns and the Secular Order.

### *Manjummel*

From the 6<sup>th</sup> October to the 10<sup>th</sup> November two of our General Definitors, Fr Pius James D'Souza and Fr Philbert Namphande, made the pastoral visitation to the Manjummel Province, in Kerala, Odisha and Majhya, India. Fr Pius went to Kerala and Fr Philbert to Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and other houses, with the participation of the Superior General in the houses of formation and at the final assembly. The final report was presented in two parts: one about the Province in general and one specifically on the Regional Vicariate of Odisha.

The origins go back to 1857 with the foundation of a Tertiary Discalced Carmelites (TOCD) in Koonammanu. In 1874, the first novitiate was established in Manjummel. The community grew in spite of initial difficulties and in 1967 it was erected as an official Province of the Order. From the beginning, it has demonstrated a strong missionary spirit, founding various missions in India and abroad, and founding other Carmelite Provinces.

At this present time, the Province has 45 communities (38 in India, 7 abroad: Switzerland, Germany, Australia and Zambia), with 257 professed members (238 solemnly professed, 225 priests, 1 permanent deacon, 4 lay brothers), approximately 140 in formation at different stages (aspirants, postulants, novitiate, philosophy and theology). There are 147 friars in Kerala, 18 in Odisha, 18 in other states of India, 24 outside India and 23 serving in other Provinces. More than 50% of the friars are less than 50 years of age. There are 22 communities of the Secular Order, with 1074 members, with an organised programme at the provincial level. Regarding apostolic work, there are 13 parishes, 10 centres of spirituality/retreats, 11 schools, 1 hospital, and various health centres, 7 centres of social services, many publications and involvement in social media.

Among the strengths of the Province, we can point to the fact that it is the second largest in the Order, with a majority of young members who are full of zeal; there is a strong sense of fraternity and collaboration, evident in joint celebrations and support when there is illness or death; the initial formation programme is well structured, especially in philosophy and theology; the attention given to elderly and infirm friars is exemplary; there is a solid missionary tradition; the 'mission retreats' (evangelization house by house) are an effective and distinct apostolate; the commitment to the financial self-sustainability through revenue generating projects; also there are innovative initiatives to promote the contemplative dimension; the many social activities are noteworthy through the centres that employ more than 220 women who have little opportunities for work; the religious offer an important contribution in different fields (ecclesial, social, medical, academic, publishing).

Among the areas which require more attention we point out the need for more dedication to the initial stages of formation and a better preparation and stability from the formators. We recommend not to send friars abroad immediately after their ordination. With regard to prayer, it is valued but in many communities personal and community prayer are affected by an excessive apostolate. We recommend strengthening silent contemplative prayer. Fraternity is positive, but some superiors neglect community meetings and monthly retreats. With regard to financial administration, the accounts are well managed, but in many communities these are not presented regularly.

Fr Philbert made a pastoral visit to the Regional Vicariate of Odisha (India) from 15<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The Vicariate is at present composed of five communities with a total of

23 friars, of whom, 8 are from the Province and 15 from the local Vicariate. The number of young people in formation is very encouraging: there are 4 students in theology, 2 in their regency year, 5 in philosophy, furthermore there is 1 novice, 6 postulants and 63 aspirants. Apart from the formation houses, there are communities dedicated to parochial ministry, education in schools and a boarding school, a school complex and a hostel.

There exists a good relationship between the vicariate and the Province, especially with regards to formation. The postulants and the students studying philosophy go to the mother Province for these stages. It is only right to mention the gratitude expressed by the Discalced Carmelite nuns for the spiritual help they receive from the friars.

Among the challenges, we can signal that in some communities the communication could be better as well as the relationships, also how to strengthen the identification with a style of life that is Carmelite. The principal recommendation is that the friars of the Province persevere and remain in the Vicariate, as their presence and experience are still fundamental to the consolidation of the growth and assure a stable future.

### *Navarre*

Fr Agusti Borrell made the pastoral visit to the Province of St Joachim of Navarre from 2<sup>nd</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> November. Father General participated in the final encounters and in the concluding assembly celebrated in Vitoria. The Province consists today of 9 communities in Spain and one in Montecarlo, as well as a mission in Malawi (where the pastoral visit was made last year). In Europe, there are 52 religious in the Province, with an average age of 81, and no novices nor simply professed. 3 religious from Malawi collaborate with them and 9 from other circumscriptions of the Order. Besides, 7 religious from the Province are at the service of the Order or with other circumscriptions. A drastic diminution in vocations is clearly evident: 60 years ago the Province had about 500 religious, and in 1990 there will still more than 150. The integration of religious coming from other countries has been a positive experience (like Malawi, Colombia and India), as they bring vitality and support by their service. However, it is necessary that they truly integrate in the dynamic of the communities and the Province.

The communities maintain an important pastoral ministry, typically parochial and similar work, even though they come up against a general decline in religious practise, as happens in many parts of Europe. They maintain Eucharistic celebrations and other sacraments, confessions, spiritual direction and accompanying groups and catechetical activities. The continuing work is outstanding in the centre of spirituality in Larrea and the college in Amorebieta.

Some recommendations from the visit would be to strengthen prayer in community and deepen fraternal life to avoid superficiality; to ferment creativity and the renewal in pastoral work; to promote vocational initiatives and revise the use and maintenance of the priories, looking for sustainable solutions that favour a witness more in accord with today social context.

The Navarre Province, which in the past was a pioneer of expansion and mission, is called now to manage with creativity and courage a process of profound transformation and adaptation to the new reality. The primary objective is not to maintain structures, but to live the Carmelite charism with authenticity, in communion with the other branches of the Order, looking towards the future with realism and hope, without falling into resignation. The Province needs to develop a provincial project for the next 4 or 5 years, centred on what is essential – prayer, fraternity and service – revitalizing vocational ministry, the apostolate of spirituality and especially missionary animation – an area that has characterised the Province and in which it can still serve as an example and direction for the rest of the Order –, at the same time it needs to strengthen collaboration with the Provinces of Iberia and Portugal,

moving towards a possible union in the future, identifying and prioritizing those houses that are viable in the future, and anticipate alternatives for those that are not viable.

### *Washington*

Fr Christophe-Marie made a pastoral visitation to the Washington Province from 27<sup>th</sup> October to 23<sup>rd</sup> November. Father General was present at the final assembly of the visitation. The Province has 3 communities with a total of 39 solemnly professed, with an average age of 68. It has undertaken a significant and promising recent vocational impulse with 14 candidates in formation (postulants, novices and simply professed).

The principal strengths of the Province are a solid, shared Carmelite identity, a vibrant fraternity that overcomes the gaps in generations, and a very dynamic and effective vocational ministry. It is important to acknowledge the great responsibility and mission towards the Secular Order (OCDS), with almost 4000 members in the Province. We ask that a programme be implemented of formation that would be obligatory for all friars who assist the OCDS, assuring that they know well their *Constitutions* and *Statutes*.

Among the points that require attention, we highlight: the need to improve internal communication among the communities, the importance of maintaining the large monastery buildings and a reflection on the duties and responsibilities of the priors in how they manage the friars committed to them. The most relevant challenges are: to accompany adequately the young brothers who have recently made solemn profession in order to prepare them progressively for leadership and to seriously study the integration of the Oklahoma Semi-Province as a Regional Vicariate of Washington, for which there will need to be particular *Statutes* and a thorough juridical analysis.

Before visiting Washington Fr Christophe-Marie accompanied the Provincial, Fr Daniel Chowning, on a visit to Kenya. At its last provincial chapter the Washington Province took the decision that at the end of the present triennium it would cease to be in charge of the mission in Kenya, but it would continue to support with financial assistance so far as possible. It has been left in the hands of the General Definitory to work with the Delegation from Kenya and with other circumscriptions to determine the best solution for the future.

From 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November, with the presence of the visitator and Father General, a meeting was held with the Provincial Councillors from the three Provinces of the United States – Washington, California & Oklahoma – together with two polish friars who had been invited from Munster (Indiana). Among the principle themes discussed were: formation in common – especially the good running of the interprovincial novitiate in Mount Angel (Oregon) –, the revision in course of the *Constitutions* of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, the liturgical translations into English and questions regarding OCDS. The meeting took place in a fraternal and collaborative atmosphere, strengthening the coordination between the Provinces of the United States.

### *Munster (Indiana), USA*

Fr Christophe-Marie visited from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November the Munster community, Indiana (USA), from the Cracow Province. This foundation has its roots in the polish emigration at the beginning of last century. The house was canonically erected in 1950 in Hammon and later moved to Munster in 1952. Today the community is composed of 8 friars, with an average age of about 61.

The principal dedication is to a Marian inspired pastoral ministry, directed primarily towards the polish diaspora. The church functions as a sanctuary dedicated to our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of Ludzmierz. Besides the Eucharistic celebrations and confessions in the sanctuary, the community looks after two groups of OCDS, one friar is

responsible for the Spanish speaking community, they serve as chaplains to two hospitals and are available to religious communities and to neighbouring parishes.

Among the recommendations, is to do as much as possible so that the apostolate has a “Carmelite color”. It would be helpful to establish and develop links with the Korona community (in Florida, from the Warsaw Province), and also with the friars of Holy Hill to strengthen fraternal ties. We also recommend that for the next triennium the community is renewed to maintain a real dynamism.

### **Follow-up from the Visitations**

At the end of the pastoral visitations, we ask all the circumscriptions to send us a report one year later on how they have applied the recommendations. On this occasion, we received several reports, from which certain elements stand out. On the other hand, we also gathered information on visitations that remain open, or on circumscriptions that are more directly under the Definitory, for various reasons.

In the *Philippines*, the provincial house has already been erected canonically, and they are making improvements for the installation. To strengthen initial formation a programme has been designed specifically for the pre-novitiate. The Province has a formation manual that is a good guide for initial formation and for what follows. A second regional novitiate has been organised for the zones of Asia Oriental and Oceania, it is programmed to start in 2026 in the Philippines. The Province is working to improve its presence in digital communication. The mission in Vietnam is progressing with the construction on a second community in Dong Nai, which should be ready by March 2026.

In *Flanders*, the most important change has been when the circumscription passed officially from a Semi-Province to a Commissariat, with newly approved *Statutes* and a commission of two councillors appointed by the General Definitory. It is managing the closure of Berchem, while the presence in Norraby, Sweden, remains fragile due to the shortage of local vocations. In the area of formation, a large team has been constituted which is working in collaboration with other Provinces. A consultative council of experts has been established who help in the preparation of dossiers about investments, buildings and management of personnel. To support communion various plenary meetings have been organised throughout the year.

In *Malawi*, an annual on-going formation programme has been organised by the friars, with sessions on Carmelite spirituality; the accompaniment of newly professed friars needs to be strengthened, and special meetings are being organised for religious of different ages. With the mother Province (Navarre), there is a constant dialogue, supported by shared publications and joint projects. The management of developmental projects has been centralised to guarantee transparency, especially with funds coming from outside. They have taken concrete steps, such as the naming of a parish assistant in Kapiri, the sending of a friar to Spain to prepare for becoming a formator, and financial application to resolve problems with electricity using solar energy.

In *Singapore-Thailand-Malaysia*, the Postulancy and Philosophy take place in Singapore and the Novitiate in the Philippines; a formation team is being established and friars have been sent for courses on formation for formators. The new foundation in Malaysia is progressing. Regarding the financial administration, work is being done so that all the goods

of the Order (land, buildings, bank accounts) are legally in the name of the Order. In order to support community life, meals are taken in common as a norm, and monthly retreat days are programmed to read and share texts on St Therese of Lisieux. There is a desire to establish a formal programme for on-going formation for all the circumscriptions.

In *Japan*, the principal object is to continue to enrich the communities with a true Carmelite spirit, balancing the needs of religious life with those of the apostolate. They want to consolidate collaboration with Indonesia, in order to reduce the average age of the members and create an atmosphere in which young Japanese will feel comfortable. It is planned to send religious to study at university and to study English. They are looking to revitalise the commissions (Vocations promotion and Formation and Apostolate and Finance) presided by the Delegate and his councillors.

### **The Triannual Chapters**

We are about to enter the stage of the triannual chapters of the different circumscriptions of the Order. The majority of them will take place during the first months of 2026, and some will be held during the last weeks of 2025.

With this occasion, Father General has sent a letter to all the circumscriptions. The central message is of gratitude for the triennium concluded and to commend all to St John of the Cross (in his centenary year) that he illumines the work of the chapters. The letter encourages the chapter members to focus not only on the elections but on it being a time for evaluation, dialogue and looking towards the future. We propose several key points for reflexion at the chapter:

- Pursue the application of a map of our presences, evaluating the situation of each circumscription and making concrete steps towards collaboration, union or regional reconfiguration.
- Discern the possible revision of our *Constitutions*, to rethink the language and theology of the Teresian charism today.
- Revitalise the experience of God and mental and community prayer, as essential elements of our Carmelite identity.
- Evaluate the support to formation in each circumscription, in the context of the *Ratio Institutionis* which is currently being processed.
- Some practical themes are the elaboration or revision of statutes for the Commissariats, the preparation of protocols against abuse and to follow the current procedure for the confirmation of superiors by Father General.

The letter concludes with an invitation to face the challenge of inculturation and with a blessing for the new superiors and councils, asking the Holy Spirit for creativity and a sense of family for the Order.

We remind you that the election of provincials does not become effective until confirmation has been obtained by Father General.

The chapters have at their disposal the Practical Instruction revised in 2022 that contains the norms and guidelines for the smooth running of the chapter. Among other things, the Practical Instruction indicates the documents and information that must be sent to the General House at the conclusion of the chapter (Appendix V).

## **The Extraordinary Definitory**

The new superiors of the circumscriptions will meet at an Extraordinary Definitory (Mexico 30<sup>th</sup> August – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2026). The meeting will serve to prepare for the next General Chapter (Nemi, Italy, May 2027), and also to look at the role of formation and to share ideas about the service of leadership for those responsible in the Circumscriptions. The meeting will offer the provincials some guidelines and instruments to facilitate the exercise of this important responsibility that has been entrusted to them. During the present Extraordinary Definitory we have begun to focus on the agenda and the calendar for the meeting (in Mexico), and at the opportune time we will send the invitation and programme to all the participants.

## **The Life of the Circumscriptions**

On this occasion, we also dealt with specific questions from some circumscriptions. To each one of these we informed them directly of our reflections and of the decisions taken. We also approved of some agreements to collaborate when a religious from one Province goes to serve in another Province, recognizing the generosity of the friars and the Circumscriptions that have been ready to help the Order in places where there is a shortage of vocations. In addition we have approved the canonical erection of the communities in Chamilala and Mwanjawantu (Zambia), and the beginning of a foundation in Natiyantota (Sri Lanka) and in Kigali (Rwanda).

The process for regularizing the structure of the Order that began at the Extraordinary Definitory in Lisieux is continuing, and in our dialogue with each Circumscription we are looking for the most suitable form and time to adapt the present reality to the typology provided for by our Norms (Province, Commisariat and Regional Vicariate). At our meeting we approved the statutes of the new Commissariats of Singapore-Thailand-Malaysia and Ecuador.

Finally, we looked at some petitions for financial help for concrete cases that have arrived from different Provinces.

## **The General Curia**

The General Procurator, Fr Juan David Noguera, informed the Definitory on the recent news regarding those cases that are being dealt with at the Vatican. According to our laws, “the Procurator General acts as liaison between the Order the Apostolic See, and exercises this function under the direction of the Superior General or the Definitory as the case may require.” (Constitutions 190). The Procurator General is in charge of presenting to the Vatican Dicastries the requests relating to the friars and also the nuns. A particularly delicate task of the Procurator is dealing with files of those religious in situations that are canonically irregular that require the intervention of the Apostolic See.

Fr Marco Chiesa, the Postulator General, informed us of news relating to causes of the saints and the liturgy of the Order. On 8th September last at a solemn and huge celebration at Verapoly (India), Eliswa of the Blessed Virgin Mary was beatified (Eliswa Vakayil). She was foundress of the Congregation of the Third Order of the Discalced Carmelites (now Teresian Carmelite Sisters). On the 24th October, Brother Joachim of the Queen of Peace (Sassello 1890 – Varazze 1985) was declared Venerable.

Regarding the liturgy, the publication of the new OCD Mass Proper is imminent in Latin. Work is progressing, slowly but surely, on the work of translation in different languages.

The Proper of the Order's Liturgy of the Hours has been presented for its official approval. Meanwhile, the incorporation of the proper texts of our liturgical calendar into the mobile application IBreviary is progressing.

The Bursar General, Fr Paolo De Carli, presented the regular tri-monthly report on the financial situation of the General House and the Institutions directly dependent upon the same. We reviewed the situation of some of the sources of income of the centre of the Order (rents, investments, donations, contributions from the Provinces, etc). On the other hand, we spoke about some of the aid that is provided, especially for formation (in Rome as elsewhere).

Regarding the works in progress, the remodelling of the convent of the parish of St Teresa adjacent to the General House is about to be completed. Similarly, the preparation of one part of the crypt in the Teresianum is making good progress; it is to take in a deposit of archival material from monasteries and convents of the Order.

Fr Jerome Paluku, Secretary for Missionary Cooperation, explained to the Definitory his impression on some of his recent activities. He has made visits to different parts of Africa in which he has offered training and guidance to friars and nuns on how to manage well the requests for financial help for developmental projects.

With Fr Jose Pereira, Secretary for Information, we spoke of the situation of different channels of communication of the General House (web page, social media, monthly bulletin...). He confirmed that the preparation is advanced for reading the texts on St John of the Cross in different languages, and that work is being carried out on the publication of a complimentary video for each text, with the participation of people from different continents. We acknowledge the convenience of being able to count on good translators in different languages for the different material that we publish.

### **The Discalced Carmelite Nuns**

Fr Rafal Wilkowski and Fr Juan Pablo Patiño informed the Definitory about their work in the Secretariat for the Nuns.

The central theme at this time is the revision of the 1991 Constitutions. The International Commission is working hard, and recently celebrated a two-week long, in-person meeting at Monte Compatri (Italy). On the 25th November last a meeting took place online with the Presidents and Councils of the Federations, the Assistants, the Provincials and other participants, at which the Commission presented the work completed until now and the expectations for the foreseeable future. The proposal for the complete index of the new Constitutions and other complementary material has been completed, and has already been sent to all the Federations to be studied in all the communities.

Also, we discussed the recent news regarding specific communities that are in different on-going processes (erection, suppression, pastoral visitations, etc.). We are following particularly closely the situation of those communities that need more help for reasons of age, health or shortage of vocations.

### **The Secular Order**

With Fr Ramiro Casale, the Delegate for the Secular Order, we dealt with some questions of interest today, as well as specific themes relating to particular communities. We

are especially attentive to those countries where the members of the Secular Order do not have the presence of the friars.

The preparation for the International Encounter of the Secular Order is progressing well. It will take place in Avila from 23rd to 26th July 2026, with the participation of one thousand members from the whole world. The programme has already been set and the final preparatory work is now underway so that everything will be ready.

On the other hand, the process for bringing up to date a census of the Secular Order has begun. Information is being gathered that will facilitate the communities from all over the world to be able to know more precisely the actual situation of the OCDS, also with regard to statistics. This census will help the government from the General House to offer a better service to the Order.

We finished our meeting of the Definitory at the beginning a year dedicated to Saint John of the Cross. The example of his life and the witness of his writings will accompany us throughout all of 2026, as a stimulation for the entire Order to imitate his life of loving attention and the depth of his union with God. On the threshold of the Nativity, we remember his admiral writings and his gratitude for the interchange between God and humanity that came about through the mystery of the Incarnation. Thus, it is sung in the conclusion of the *Romances*, evoking the gaze of wonder and contemplation of Mary before the birth of Jesus:

*The Mother gazed in sheer wonder on such an exchange:  
in God, man's weeping,  
and in man, gladness,  
to the one and the other things usually so strange.*

To all our brothers and sisters in Carmel we wish all of you from our hearts a merry Christmas and a holy 2026.

Faternally,

Fr Miguel Marquez Calle, *General*  
Fr Agusti Borrell i Viader  
Fr Pius James D'Souza  
Fr Philbert Namphande  
Fr Robert Maria Pirastu

Fr Christianus Surinono  
Fr Martin Martinez Larios  
Fr Christophe-Marie Baudouin  
Fr Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem