



GENERAL DEFINITORY
OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES
Corso d'Italia, 38
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Saint John
of the Cross
2026

SEXENNIUM 2021-2027 – LETTER n° 19

Rome, March 15, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in the Teresian Carmel:

The General Definitory had its trimestral meeting in Rome from the 2nd to the 13th of March. During the first days, Fr. Pius participated in the meeting online from Qatar because of the war situation in the region. Fortunately, on Saturday the 7th he was able to fly to Rome. We are following attentively the situation of our brothers and sisters in Israel, Lebanon, Iraq and other nearby countries. We pray with insistence and hope for peace in the world.

We initiated our meeting with a brief review of the activities that each of us has done during past weeks and of the meetings in which we have participated. This year is characterized by the celebration of St. John of the Cross' jubilee, which is having a noticeable echo in many regions of the world. On the other hand, we friars are in the semester of triennial chapters, which help to revise and renew the projects and programming of each circumscription and elect those responsible for the service of government.

Priority topics

As in previous occasions, we have reviewed the priority topics of the sexennium.

Initial formation

We highlight in the first place that the intensive work of revising the *Ratio Institutionis* continues. In mid-March of 2026, the international commission have met in the General House to continue the analysis of the suggestions received from the circumscriptions of the Order and move forward the redaction of the text's final draft.

We have also shared some information about the community at the International College in Rome. We have received at the General House the pleasant visit of the first year students. Some circumscriptions have requested in addition to the students of theology, the students of philosophy also be received in Rome. We will be considering the matter at length in dialogue with the different parties involved.

Intellectual and academic life

Regarding the centers for studies, we have maintained close dialogue with Fr. Christof Betschart, who is reaching the end of his second triennium as president of the Teresianum. We are grateful for his active dedication and effective service during these last two terms. He has presented us with a report about the situation and perspectives of the Faculty of Theology and the Institute of Spirituality, apart from some information about centers associated with the Teresianum. The body of professors remains stable. Even though some of them are reaching their time of retirement, there are good possibilities of renewal with young candidates. Even if the number of students is not too high it allows the different academic cycles to remain active. We continue encouraging the religious of our Order to value study and research and the different circumscriptions to send students to Rome. Meanwhile the Teresianum continues working to renew its academic offer with new initiatives as for example a potential link between the courses for formators and the degree of licentiate.

CITeS in Avila continues with its varied program of courses and activities. These days we have been officially informed that the request of aggregation to the Teresianum cannot be accepted at the moment by the Dicastery for Culture and Education. The reason for this is that the Conference of Spanish Bishops has initiated a global revision process of the map of the centers for superior studies and has temporarily suspended the granting of new permits.

On November 14, 2026 will be the 100th anniversary of the St. Teresa of Jesus & St. John of the Cross International College in Rome, which had its origin in the current see of the General House. This institution was not only the seed of the current International College, but also of the Theological Faculty of the Teresianum and the community of professors. We are considering the possibility of making a commemoration that involves the Teresianum and the General House.

Youth ministry

The Definitory continues to be especially interested in the promotion of youth ministry in the whole Order. There is a firm commitment to establish an international commission that is operative and efficacious. In view of this, a dialogue has begun with approximately fifteen delegates and others who are responsible for pastoral work in different regions. It was underscored the importance of starting to work as soon as possible for the next World Youth Day in Seoul (South Korea), which will take place from August 3 to August 8 of 2027, and with the support of the local Archbishop, our brother Peter Chung.

Anniversaries

The celebration of the Jubilee Year of St. John of the Cross continues as we commemorate the third centenary of his canonization (December 27, 1726) and the first centenary of his declaration as Doctor of the Church (August 24, 1926). The celebrations of the beginning of the centenary in Ubeda and Segovia were positively evaluated. The highlight of these was the restoration work of his tomb. The material for the reading in community of St. John's texts centered on the theme of creation has been well received. It has been helpful to many in getting closer to the Saint and his writings from this concrete perspective. Meanwhile the Iberian Province has organized different religious and cultural events in the sites associated with St. John of the Cross.

We have published the detailed program of the important International Congress organized by the Teresianum and CITEs in Rome and Avila from June 22nd to the 26th of 2026. It will include the participation of well recognized experts in St. John of the Cross and mysticism in general. It will be possible to attend it either in person or online:

www.teresianum.net/congresso-2026

www.mistica.es/evento/la-mistica-paraiso-perdido-o-tierra-de-promision.

Next year of 2027 will be the first centenary of the declaration of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus as patroness of the missions (December 14, 1927). It will be a good occasion for a deep reflection on the importance of missions in the Order and on the missionary and apostolic dimensions as an essential part of our way of life. This could be a relevant topic for the next General Chapter, which will take place precisely next year.

Marian life

In regards to our Marian life, we value the positive impact of some recent initiatives. One of the projects in progress is the consultation with those responsible for the Order's Marian shrines in order to promote Marian devotion. We seek to grow in a devotion that is mature, staying away from what is superficial and focusing on a renewed Marian theology.

Pastoral visitations

The Definitory has analyzed the reports on pastoral visits that the Definitors have made in past weeks. We present here the most significant information and some of the verifications and proposals approved by the Definitory.

Malabar

Fr. Pius made the pastoral visitation to the Malabar Province (India) between January and February of 2026. The visitation was divided in two phases: the first one to the Ranchi Delegation and the second one to Kerala and Bangalore. Father General was present in the visitation from February 6th to February 19.

The Province has 197 solemnly professed friars. There is a constant flow of vocations with 26 postulants, 9 novices and 31 friars in temporary vows. They manage 30 houses with 6 parishes, 6 spirituality centers and institutions such as publishing houses (*Carmel International Publishing House*) and social centers. More than half of its members are less than 50 years old. They have a high academic level, with 40 friars with Doctoral degrees. There is a strong commitment to the ministry of confession, spirituality centers, and missionary work.

The report points out that some areas are in need of attention. It was observed that there's a tendency to neglect silent (mental) prayer because of an excess in apostolic activities. Even though the Province is financially stable thanks to commercial projects, many individual houses are not self-sufficient. It is recommended to make internal audits every year. The frequent moving of friars is a matter of concern because it implies instability. Regarding formation, it is urgent to prepare formators and professors of philosophy and theology.

Some decisions of the visitation are: to create a detailed plan to prepare the new formators; to prioritize making each community financially self-sufficient; to ensure and protect real estate; to sell the property in Kainakary in order to acquire another one in the same diocese.

Regarding the Ranchi Delegation, the mission started in 1989 with one house in Kokar (Ranchi), in the state of Jharkhand. It was established by the Malabar Province to expand the Carmelite presence and evangelize the northeast of India (Jharkhand and Bihar). It has a total of 8 houses and 31 friars, 23 of whom are from the north state of India. There are 52 young men in different stages of formation with 20 aspirants and 10 theology students. They manage 3 schools (Ormanjhi, Bandhgari, and Dumka) and a spirituality center in Kokar.

They recently finished building the church of the Velankanni Matha shrine in Simdega (September 2024) and a church in honor of St. Thérèse (July 2025). They also started a new mission in Harimohra (Bihar), where they acquired two acres of land, completed the perimetral wall in Kunti and the construction of the convent is in progress.

The members have a unanimous desire to form a Regional Vicariate. The Definitory sees the mission as promising and has asked the Province to prepare the Statutes to make the formal request. It's important to prepare the friars to assume responsibility as formators and school administrators.

Since Fr. Pius presented his report, we have been discussing the best way to continue accompanying and helping the Malabar Province. In the upcoming days we will communicate in detail to the Province the decisions made and the Definitory's petitions for the new triennium.

Genoa

The Definitors Robert M. Pirastu and Christophe-Marie Baudouin made the visitation to the Province of St. Ann of Genoa from January 6 to January 29, including the communities of the Czeck Republic. Father General was present in the closing of the visitation.

The Province has a long history and maintains notable vitality, but it faces a new situation marked by an incipient decrease in numbers. It currently has 79 solemnly professed friars in Italy, the Central African Republic, and the Czech Republic. In the Provincial territory of Italy there are 3 monasteries of Discalced Carmelite nuns and 2 in the Czech Republic. Regarding the Secular Carmel, there are 8 communities in Italy, 1 in the Czech Republic, and 3 in the Central African Republic.

It is remarkable the activity of emblematic centers in Italy, such as the shrine of Arenzano (devotion to the Child Jesus and the Minor Seminary), the formation community of Genoa (with its historic pharmacy) and the spirituality center of Bocca di Magra. However, it is noticeable the tiredness in some communities due to the excess of pastoral load and the management of large buildings.

The Czech Republic Delegation, centered in the Infant Jesus of Prague Shrine, needs revitalization. It has been proposed to start dialogue with the Cracow Province for a possible collaboration with the Slovakian friars.

Regarding formation and vocational promotion work, we recognize the efforts made at the Minor Seminary. We recommend promoting development of the pastoral work with youth of other spheres and improving the personalized accompaniment offered to religious after their solemn profession.

The economy is balanced, but income is decreasing. We advise a greater accompaniment and coordination from the Provincial economy so as to adapt the use of large structures to the real needs of the communities.

Among the proposals for the future we highlight: to elaborate a restructuring plan for the communities in Italy that includes the closing of at least one community in order to strengthen the rest, give more autonomy to the postulancy year and promote collaboration with the Sicily Commissariat.

In conclusion, the Province enjoys a solid charismatic foundation and a realistic vision, but it needs to make courageous decisions to prioritize the quality of religious life over the maintenance of physical structures.

Central African Republic

The Definitors Philbert Namphande and Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem made the visitation to the Central African Republic from the 1st to the 27th of February of 2026. Father General was present in the last days of the visitation. The delegation belongs to the Genoa Province and has five communities and three fraternities of the Secular Carmel. There are 22 solemnly professed friars (4 in Italy and 2 in Cameroon) and 18 friars in simple vows (3 in Italy and 3 in Cameroon).

The five current communities are:

- Bozoum (St. Michael Parish): Founded in 1971, it's the first presence of the Carmelites in the country. The main challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure in the convent.
- Yolé/Bouar (Child Jesus Seminary): Considered the best high school in the country. It houses 77 resident seminarians and a total of 231 daily students. The community manages a large property of 150 hectares with farms and workshops.
- Bouar (St. Elijah): Novitiate house. It currently has 5 novices (none of them from Central Africa Republic this year).
- Baoro (Parish): The community is dedicated to parish ministry and education.
- Bangui (House of philosophy students): Young and enthusiastic community. It has 130 hectares dedicated to agriculture and an agrarian school to promote economic autonomy.

The report highlights that the communities live faithfully the pillars of prayer, fraternity, and apostolate, but it also identifies some critical areas. Even though there are great patrimonies and agricultural projects there is also a significant dependency on external help (Procura of Missions). We recommend to professionalize management with experts on projects and administration. There's an urgent need for the reform of the oldest houses, especially Bozoum, so as to guarantee minimal life conditions. We warn about the risk of falling into activism and the exhaustion of the friars due to the heavy load of social and parish activities. We ask that a balance between the Carmelite identity and pastoral service is brought about. Finally, the beginning of the process to constitute a Vicariate Region has been set out.

Cameroon

The visitation of the Cameroon Mission took place from January 1st to January 24, 2026. It was made by the Definitors Jean-Baptist Pagabeleguem and Philbert Namphande, with the

participation of our Father General at the end. The Cameroon Mission belongs to the Commissariat of Lombardy and has two communities of friars (one parish and one house for theology students), three monasteries of nuns, and three fraternities of OCDS. There are 11 solemnly professed friars from Cameroon (3 out of the mission), 4 from other circumscriptions, and 9 friars in simple vows, apart from 5 novices.

The visitation has allowed us to identify the great potential of our presence in Cameroon, and at the same time to trace a clear route to revitalize the Carmelite identity. In order to improve internal cohesion and the quality of the communication among the brothers, we propose a return to the sources through the shared study of the *Declaration on the Charism of Discalced Carmelites*. This should foster spaces for transparent dialogue and will redesign fraternal living so that trust and mutual support become the norm and not the exception.

There's also the need to improve the formation environment and spiritual discipline in the theologate, assuring that the young friars grow in an atmosphere of respect and contemplative silence. We establish a period of 3 years without postulants so as to allow the current community to consolidate and create a fraternal and serene environment before receiving new vocations. Formators are to live in direct contact with the students to guarantee a constant and close learning of the Carmelite life. In the same way, they are to boost permanent formation and personal renewal, taking into account the need of some brothers to reconnect with the essence of the charism after years of intense service.

In regards to financial administration, there's a need to professionalize management and to bring clarity in property titles so as to guarantee the juridical safety of the mission. They need to establish clearer protocols of accountability and to expedite procedures with the local Dioceses to regularize plots of land. The objective is to achieve a responsible autonomy that allows the mission to be self-sustaining in the long term.

The General Definitory commits itself to a more frequent and close presence. For this reason, the general visitation will remain open. In November 2026 we will make a follow-up visitation to guarantee the accomplishment achieved and adjust what is needed with the objective to bring about in the Cameroon Carmel a renewed authenticity centered on prayer, mutual respect, fraternity, obedience and service to the Church. The Cameroon Mission is to be connected to a Province for a better accompaniment.

Visitations follow-up

As it was established, some circumscriptions have sent the applications for the conclusion of the general visitation.

Germany

The Province has agreed to collaborate with Austria and Croatia in initial formation, participating in the common novitiate in Graz. Ratisbona (Regensburg) will be the community in charge of receiving potential candidates. They plan to reinforce the vocational promotion team. There has been progress in financial transparency, with monthly balance statements sent by each community to the Provincial house. Other topics such as the future of the Birkenwerder

community, the spiritual exercises house, and the strategic plan of the Province will be discussed in the next Provincial Chapter in May.

Madagascar

Each community has gone back to the commitment of having community recreation according to the Carmelite style and of reading in community the *Declaration on the charism*. In regards to economic management, a work team has been formed, all communities are now using a common software, and the Commissariat's Council is meeting with the communities to address administration challenges.

Burundi-Rwanda

The most urgent and demanding challenges are identity and formation. For this reason, they are working intensely on the formation of formators, aware that the future of the circumscription depends on the quality of the current formation. In regards to the economy, they are working towards and effective economic autonomy, managing resources with total transparency and seeking local sources of income. The report underscores the importance of constant discernment in dialogue with the Cracow Province (to which they belong) and with the General Definitory. The document reasserts the commitment of the Rwanda and Burundi brothers to continue growing in fraternity and fidelity to the charism.

Senegal

The Keur Mariama community has prioritized the construction project of a new guest house. They have strengthened the vocational accompaniment system through the creation of a team that meets every three months to coordinate formation. The bishop of Kaolack has praised the community's work, highlighting its service in the rural parish of Ndiaffate, their classes at the seminary, and one brother's participation in the finance council of the Diocese. It is to be noticed the work of a small Group of Economic Interest (GEI), that apart from generating jobs for women of the area, promotes a culture of financial self-management and responsibility among the youth in formation, even though the financial benefits are still minimal. They have acquired a plot of land in Dakar with the objective of establishing a new presence.

Chile

After the celebration of the Chapter Assembly of the Commissariat and with the information received from the current Commissary, Fr. Cristhian Ogueda and from the Definitory and Visitator Fr. Martin Martinez, we have seen the progress made in the last years. For this reason, we have formally closed the general visitation, which was still open.

Triennial Chapters

We are in the midst of the time period of triennial Chapters of the Order's circumscriptions. We are receiving the information and documentation that each Chapter assembly is to send to the General House and we are following with solicitude the development

of each of them. The Definitors have informed about the assemblies in which they have participated so far.

In regards to the triennial Chapters, progress is being made in the process of regularization of the existing circumscriptions. As it was determined in view of the Extraordinary Definitory in Lisieux (September 2023), we are trying to go back to the indications already present in our own laws since we had moved away from them in the recent practice. We maintain three kinds of circumscriptions: one of them autonomous (Province and exceptionally Semi-Province), one dependent on a Province (Regional Vicariate), and one dependent on the General Definitory (Commissariat). General delegations will become Commissariats, with the elaboration of proper *Statutes*. Provincial Delegations should become Regional Vicariates when the proper conditions take place. However, it is still possible for the Provincial to name a Delegate for some houses that are far away of the Province's center (*Applicative Norms* 220), without implying the existence of a circumscription. The Chapters that are currently taking place are the adequate moment to make the necessary decisions on this matter.

The Definitory emitted an authentic interpretation regarding the participation of the Regional Vicariates in Provincial Chapters (*Applicative Norms* 158 e). It was clarified that the Vicar and the Delegate have active voice only in the election of the Provincial, the Counselors, the Delegate to the ordinary Chapter (and his Substitute) and in non-elective decisions. They do not have active voice in the election of house superiors and other offices.

Life of the circumscriptions

The Definitory has received and analyzed some collaboration agreements for initial formation, such as the ones for Austria, Croatia, and Germany for the interprovincial novitiate in Graz (Austria). We have also analyzed some agreements to allow a religious of a Province to serve at a different Province. In some cases, we have requested these to be revised so as to follow the letter and the spirit of our laws (cfr. *Applicative Norms* 136-137) and with the determinations of the Extraordinary Definitory of Lisieux (September 2023). Thus, we ask for an update before the end of this year of 2026 of the agreements between Provincials previously stipulated that don't fulfill these criteria.

Among the concrete matters referred to the circumscriptions about which we have dialogued in our meetings, we highlight the following:

Australia: In the current Regional Vicariate there are two communities, one in Perth and another one in Sidney. The Definitory favors initiating the process to constitute a Commissariat. It also favors having only one circumscription in Australia in the future that also includes the presence of the current religious communities of religious from India.

Israel: We continue paying much attention to the special situation in Israel, which is particularly delicate because of the political situation of the region. The life of our religious is conditioned by factors such as the lack of pilgrims. Fr. Canice Iheanyichyukwu from Nigeria was

recently incorporated into the Stella Maris community. They are awaiting the arrival of more candidates: Varghese Ammakuzhiyil (Province of Delhi), Nathaniel M. Maravilloso (Province of the Philippines), and Frederic Jaworski (Province of Cracow). We have set out a year of discernment with these brothers. At the end of it, we will do an evaluation about their stay in the Middle East (Mount Carmel and Iraq). We are deeply grateful to the Provinces for their generosity.

We have reviewed the current state of the remodeling and construction projects in our properties in Wadi es-Siah, and Kikar Paris. We have also established a commission with religious from Israel and the General House to discern priorities and possibilities, and boost the development of the work being done.

Kenia: The mission in Kenia, belonging until now to the Washington Province, will begin the process of becoming a Commissariat depending on the Definitory. It will be a provisional situation to facilitate collaboration with other circumscriptions of the region according to the map of the Order's presence proposed by the General Government in September of 2023. The Delegates from Kenia will participate for the last time in the next Provincial Chapter of Washington. It will be an ideal moment to mutually express gratitude for the shared history up to the present. After that we will proceed with the formal setting-up of the Commissariat. The Province will continue for a time to offer financial help to Kenia through the General House.

Superiors' Conference of Africa: The two African definitors have informed about the joint meeting of the English-speaking and French-speaking conferences of Superiors of Africa, which took place in Nigeria at the end of January. Among other topics, they spoke about the congress to be celebrated in Nigeria in 2029, the progressive transition of the Provincial Delegations to Regional Vicariates, and the formation of formators.

North CICLA: We have commented on the current situation and perspectives of collaboration for initial formation among the North CICLA circumscriptions. These maintain a common novitiate in Lepaterique (Honduras) and a common house of studies in Mexico City (Mexico). We encourage this kind of interprovincial collaboration in initial formation, which enriches the charismatic life of modern Carmel.

Korea-China: There are three Carmelite students from Chinese origin who are currently studying in Spain and Italy.

East Timor: Together with the Province of Portugal, which is the promotor of a mission in East Timor, we continue seeking collaboration of other circumscriptions so as to be able to solidly reestablish the presence of the Order.

India: The Provincials' Conference of India (IPCI) is working on a project for a possible new interprovincial Carmelite academic center.

Iraq: Some religious have made themselves available to reinforce the Order's presence in Iraq, where Fr. Ghadir is currently present, besides Archbishop Jean Sleiman. Deacon Dominic Pham Dinh Phu, from Vietnam and belonging to the Philippines Province, will go to Haifa to study Arabic. He will be ordained a presbyter on April 21 and has offered himself for the mission in Iraq. Once again, we continue to request and expect from Provincials and Chapters some more candidates for the mission in Iraq.

Vietnam (Philippines): At the request of the Province, we have accepted the canonical erection of the house in Dong Nai.

Financial aid requests: On this occasion as well we have received several requests for financial aid, which we are analyzing in detail and to which we will respond directly. We welcome especially requests for initial formation and our presence in regions of need. It is always necessary that the projects are clear and concrete, and that they are guaranteed by the Major Superiors.

The Extraordinary Definitory

During the meeting we have worked on the concrete preparation of the Extraordinary Definitory, which is to take place from August 30 (arrival) to September 9 (departure) in Mexico City. We have discerned the rotation of the representatives of the circumscriptions so as to assure the presence of the various geographical areas of the Order (cfr. *Constitutions* 187). In the following days we will send the official convocation with the details on the participants, the orientation program, and practical indications. We remind everyone of the need to request visas with enough time ahead for the countries that need them.

The meeting will help to look ahead to the next General Chapter with a preferential attention to the charismatic identity and to discuss topics such as our way of life, formation, the restructuring of circumscriptions, and the significance of mission and the missions in the Order, among others. Apart from the usual topics (state of the Order, financial report, etc.) some sessions will be dedicated to reflect about the different aspects of the attributions and responsibilities of the Order's Major Superiors, with conferences and useful material to exercise this service effectively.

The General Curia

General Procura

The General Procurator, Fr. Juan David Noguera, has informed the Definitory about the recent steps taken in the different processes and actions referring to different friars of the Order. In general, progress is being made in the resolution of pending matters. However, some cases remain stuck for different reasons, some of them for some time. The necessary canonical

regularization of irregular situations, which at times is slow and complex, is always done seeking the good of concrete persons and of the Order.

General postulation

Fr. Marco Chiesa, General Postulator, has reported on the work done in 2025. Some prominent events are the proclamation of a new blessed, Eliswa of the Virgin Mary, and of two new venerables, Cunegonda Siwiec and Joaquim of the Queen of Peace.

In collaboration with the General Archive, they have begun for the first time the systematic cataloguing of the entire content of the Postulation. Similarly, they are in the process of returning to the different Actors the material of the causes that General Postulators had assumed to personal title. Regarding relics, activity has focused on the regularization and control of new existing norms.

In the liturgical arena, it stands out the approval of the *Editio typica altera* of the Proper of OCD Masses in Latin and of some proper texts. Work is being done at different pace in the translations to different languages. The dossier of the *Editio typica* in Latin of the Liturgy of the Hours of the Order continues in the Dicastery awaiting approval. We have started collaboration with the iBreviary application which will allow for a digital edition of the proper liturgy in some languages. Finally, an *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* has been edited, which collects all the decrees on indulgences granted to the Order.

General economy

The General Bursar, Fr. Paolo De Carli, presented a global vision of the economic situation of the General House and of various projects in progress.

The 2025 accounting year closed showing losses, which were the result of different extraordinary factors, such as the increase in electricity costs, current repair works, and the financial help sent to different circumscriptions of the Order. However, the General House maintains a solid patrimonial base and funds that guarantee stability and continuity.

The Order has continued offering support to multiple regions (Venezuela, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, etc.). An important investment has been the remodeling of the convent of St. Teresa in Rome, the annex to the General House, the repair work in St. Pancrazio's parish, and other structural interventions. A good part of the contributions has been destined to the Teresianum (faculty, international college, specialization community...).

The fund for monasteries continues to show a high rhythm of income and expenses. The formation fund has been partially strengthened thanks to an extraordinary donation. Regarding the relationship with the Provinces, it was reminded the sending of their triennial balances and the shared responsibility in financial sustainability. We have highlighted the situation of several Provinces with communication difficulties and payment delays or with contribution systems that are not too efficient.

The General Bursar presented economic predictions for 2026. He insisted on the need of creating strategies to guarantee the sustainability of the large formation centers, strengthen institutional communication and financial transparency, and continuing to develop projects that favor stability, efficiency, and the support of the communities in most need.

The Definitory expressed its gratitude for the exhaustive and intense work done by Fr. Paolo and his collaborators who support the economic administration.

Missionary cooperation

Fr. Jérôme Paluku presented to the Definitory the report on the situation and activity of the Secretariat for Missionary Cooperation for the year 2025. It is important to remember that his main mission is to counsel, sustain, accompany, and assist the brothers in missions and to act as a channel of collaboration among the Order's missions and aid agencies.

The Secretariate is financed from two sources: the contributions from the Provinces and donations. The main expenses are for mission projects, giving priority to those related to formation. We note that only half of the circumscriptions contribute on a regular basis. For this reason, there has been a strengthening of the relationship with agencies of cooperation, which are especially beneficial with the CEI (Italian Episcopal Conference). Each agency has proper norms that need to be followed so as to maintain a relationship of trust. Any project poorly managed, the improper use of funds, or the lack of detailed information about the use of funds received undermines the agencies' trust in the Order.

The restoration of the church building of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in La Habana (Cuba) continues slowly because of the country's situation. Some of the funds received remain at the Secretariat until they can be used adequately.

Fiamma Viva Foundation

We have dedicated a session of the assembly to the "*Fondazione Fiamma Viva ETS*", which the Definitory created to promote and finance cultural projects in Rome and other places. The person responsible for finances presented the first official balance report, which included incomes with donations from particular individuals and collaborating companies, and constitution expenses, and bank and administrative material.

In the meeting we debated over the need to create study grants to strengthen formation in the Order, promote participation in the "*5x1000*" in Italy (in order to receive more donations), prepare communication material (brochures, digital information), and especially to evaluate cultural projects, such as the restoration and future opening of the former *Spezieria della Scala* museum.

Discalced Carmelite Nuns

Fr. Rafał Wilkowski and Fr. Juan Pablo Patiño, who are responsible for the Secretariat for the nuns, reported to the Definitory on their work.

The International Commission for the Revision of the *Constitutions (1991)* continues in full activity. They have carried out various online meetings and are preparing the next meeting in person which will take place in Avila in the month of May. At the same time, the Federations and Associations are contributing to the proposed index with observations. They have also created a virtual space with formative material in which all the nuns can access recent videos and documents.

We have dialogued about complex situations that are happening in various regions: suppression of monasteries, affiliation to Federations to guarantee a better follow-up, decrease in vocations, financial problems or government difficulties. In all cases, it is most important to value discernment, prudence, and the protection of persons and communities. We have been concerned with the emergence of situations that affect the serenity and maturity of community life: internal tensions, the inadequate exercise of authority, pseudo-mystical phenomena, communities that are apparently stable but hide deep problems, resistance to decisions from Superiors and even from the Dicastery, the search of nuns from foreign countries to avoid the closure of communities without a future... These facts invite us to work for a healthy and well-balanced contemplative life, centered on the Gospel, just as St. Teresa conceived it.

In regards to the economy, we thank in a special way various communities and federations for their generosity. They have contributed significantly to help many monasteries in need. This solidarity is an expression of fraternity and co-responsibility. We continue to accompany communities that need to face reorganization processes, sale of property or the redefinition of their structures.

The Secretariat asks that, in the formal communications to any official organism, civil names are included so as to avoid confusion in the identification of sisters and communities. Also, as established in the *Constitutions*, after the death of a religious sister, please immediately notify the General Curia about.

Secular Carmel

We have dialogued with Fr. Ramiro Casale, Delegate to the Secular Order, about the activity of the Seculars in various regions, giving special attention to challenges regarding communication and formation. We have received information about matters concerning the communities in Scandinavia, Iraq, Canada, the Netherlands, Hungary, and India, among others. We have also reviewed and approved the proposed modifications to the *Statutes* of Naples and Central Italy.

The collecting of data to complete the world census of the Secular Order continues. This will be especially helpful in improving the general government's service to the whole Order. In the same way, the preparations for the *OCD World Encounter* (Avila, July 22-26, 2026) are very much advanced. The participation of more than 800 Secular Order members from 70 countries is confirmed (more information at www.ocdsavila2026.com).

Fr. Ramiro shared some details about its way to make community visitations. These are meant to be a sign of fraternal presence and communion with all the Order, in particular those communities that have less possibilities to interact with the friars or the nuns. He also announced his next visitation to Argentina and Chile next month.

These days we have welcomed the new Prior General (Desiderio García) and General Council of the Carmelites (O. Carm). We have shared in dialogue about topics of common interest. They have informed us about their last General Chapter celebrated in Indonesia in

September of last year and about the first steps of the new sexennium. We have also talked about, among other topics, the current situation of both Orders in the world, the centenary of St. John of the Cross, the centenary of the pontifical approval of the Carmelite Rule and other anniversaries, and the revision process of the Constitutions.

As we finish the meetings of the Definitory we are getting ready to participate with the whole community of the General House in the annual spiritual exercises. These will prepare us to celebrate the Easter Triduum with all attention and truth, and to immerse ourselves in the time and atmosphere of the resurrection. In this year dedicated to St. John of the Cross we welcome his invitation to set our gaze on the Crucified, who gives his life on the cross out of love for humanity. The poem *The Little Shepherd* beautifully expresses it in this way:

After a long time he climbed a tree,
and spread his shining arms,
and hung by them, and died,
his heart an open wound with love.¹

Blessed and happy Easter for all.

Fraternally,

Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, *general*

Fr. Agustí Borrell i Viader

Fr. Pius James D'Souza

Fr. Philbert Namphande

Fr. Roberto Maria Pirastu

Fr. Christianus Surinono

Fr. Martín Martínez Larios

Fr. Christophe-Marie Baudouin

Fr. Jean-Baptiste Pagabeleguem

¹*The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ICS (1991) Washington DC, p. 58.