



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° 20

Rome, June 15, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in the Teresian Carmel:

The General Definitory met in Rome from June 1st to the 12th for its latest trimestral gathering. At this time, the life of the Order is characterized by the celebration of triennial chapters and chapter congresses, preparations for the Extraordinary Definitory in September, and the approaching 2027 General Chapter. We continue to mark these events within the context of the jubilee year of St. John of the Cross, celebrating with gratitude and a desire to deepen our knowledge and imitation of the Saint.

During these days, we gave thanks to the Lord for the life and example of Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew on the 400th anniversary of her death. Father General and Fr. Christophe-Marie participated in the celebrations held on June 6th and 7th in Antwerp, Belgium. Father General also sent a letter to the Order to commemorate this anniversary.

Priority Topics

As is our custom, we have reviewed the priority topics for this sexennium.

Initial Formation

In the area of formation, the intense work of revising the *Ratio Institutionis* continues. We have received the latest input, and the commission has prepared the draft of the text. This will be submitted for a final editorial revision and then presented to the Extraordinary Definitory in September 2026.

Intellectual and Academic Life

Regarding our study centers, we joyfully welcomed the news that Fr. Emilio José Martínez González was appointed by the Dicastery for Culture and Education as the new president of the Teresianum. We congratulate Fr. Emilio, thank him for his willingness to serve, and wish him a fruitful tenure in an academic environment of such great significance to the Order.

Likewise, we renew our gratitude to Fr. Christof Betschart for his dedicated service as the head of the Teresianum over the last six years.

Notably, this year marks the centenary of the beginning of the Order's theological studies in Rome, which commenced on November 14, 1926. This serves as a wonderful occasion to provide new impetus to the academic and intellectual life of the entire Order.

Youth Ministry

The delegates and those responsible for youth ministry across our different regions are currently in dialogue under the direction of the Definitory. They have proposed various initiatives to enrich and coordinate our work with young people worldwide.

Progress is being made on the creation of the OCD International Commission for Youth Ministry, which is intended to be a simple and operative structure to foster this ministry within the Order. The Commission will meet this month of June to concretize several initiatives. One of the primary objectives is to prepare for Carmel's participation in the next World Youth Day, which will be held in Seoul (South Korea) from August 3 to 8, 2027. Our brother and local bishop, Peter Chung, will serve as the host.

Anniversaries

Regarding the jubilee year of St. John of the Cross, various commemorative events continue to take place globally, particularly throughout the Iberian Province. The General House is also continuing to publish reading materials from the Saint's writings for community discussion; these resources remain accessible via our website.

Additionally, the International Congress, organized by the Teresianum and CITEs, will be celebrated from June 22 to 26, 2026. This upcoming event will feature renowned experts in the life of St. John of the Cross and the study of mysticism.

Life in the Circumscriptions

We have commented extensively on the development of the triennial chapters within the Order's circumscriptions, many of which took place during these past weeks. The Chapter Congresses of the Commissariats, which depend directly on the General Government, were presided over by one of the Definitors acting as a delegate of Father General. We remind everyone that Father General serves as the Major Superior of the Commissariats; as such, he makes the most significant appointments after consulting with the members of the circumscription. Additionally, several Provinces and Semi-Provinces welcomed the presence of a Definitor at their Provincial Chapters. The Regional Vicariates, which are part of a Province, celebrate their Chapter Congresses following their respective Provincial Chapters.

All circumscriptions have received the General's letter, which highlighted several important elements to be considered during the Chapter's discernment. Among these was the possible revision of the Constitutions, aimed at revitalizing our life and charismatic identity. We

have now received responses from the Chapters on this matter and are currently in the process of analyzing them.

Another important topic addressed in the letter to the Chapters, and one on which the Order is working during this sexennium, is the reorganization of the circumscriptions and the collaboration between nearby regions. This is a vital matter for responding realistically and with good disposition to the changing situations across different locations, while simultaneously growing in our sense of family. We have received information regarding the positive and concrete steps for collaboration currently being taken among several circumscriptions: Oklahoma and Washington; Venezuela and the Caribbean; Sicily and Genoa; Avignon-Aquitania and Paris; Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay; and Japan and Indonesia. While dialogue continues in other regions as well, we recognize it is moving slowly in some instances. We encourage everyone to move forward in this spirit of communion, which facilitates the practical organization of our presence and favors a better living out of our charism in all its dimensions.

In the meantime, we continue to seek the best ways to accompany and support those regions that, for various reasons, experience weakness and uncertainty when facing the future. In places such as Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—as well as in younger presences where the accompaniment of mother Provinces has diminished (such as Cameroon, Kenya, or Uganda)—dialogue and discernment continue in order to advance toward a more stable configuration through potential collaboration with other circumscriptions. In some cases, the Definitory temporarily designates a region as a commissariat to facilitate closer accompaniment during this process. This has been the case for Kenya, Oklahoma, Holland, and Argentina.

As requested, we are currently receiving the particular statutes from the Commissariats and Regional Vicariates, which must be reviewed by the Definitory. Several Commissariats and Regional Vicariates have expressed the desire to transition into Provinces. To date, we have received official petitions from Indonesia, Madagascar, Congo, and Nigeria.

The Definitory is carefully analyzing the situation of each of these circumscriptions to ensure they meet all necessary spiritual, material, and vocational requirements, in accordance with Constitution 146. In cases where the evaluation is positive, a formal petition may be presented during the next General Chapter, which is the body responsible for such decisions under Constitution 145.

The Provinces that have not yet celebrated their Chapters are scheduled to do so in the coming days. One of these is the Malabar Province, which has its Chapter Assembly scheduled for the beginning of July. Fr. Pius will attend as the visitor and delegate of Father General. It is expected that once the new government is installed, the general visitation — which had remained open — will be closed. The visitations of the Provinces of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have been concluded.

Regarding our presence in Israel, Father General plans to make a visit at the beginning of July. We have five new candidates from various origins who are currently preparing to be

incorporated into the Delegation. Additionally, Fr. Aboud Aboud has been appointed as the new Pastor of our parish in Haifa.

On behalf of the entire Order, we express our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Fr. Francisco Negral, who celebrated 50 years of priesthood on June 5. He has dedicated the majority of his life to serving Carmel in the Holy Land.

General Visitations

The current sexennium (2021–2027) is entering its final stage. According to the calendar established at the beginning of this period, practically all general pastoral visitations have concluded, with only a few having taken place recently.

Netherlands (Holland)

Father General and Fr. Christophe-Marie conducted the general pastoral visitation of the Semi-Province of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in the Netherlands from May 1 to May 7. Founded in 1935 with three monasteries, the jurisdiction became a Province in 1960 before returning to the status of a Semi-Province in 2012. It currently comprises three communities — Utrecht, Overloon, and Amsterdam — and nine religious with an average age exceeding 81 years. Additionally, there are two communities of Discalced Carmelite Nuns, located in Oirschot and Echt, with six sisters in each. The Secular Order, however, maintains six communities and sixty-nine members, though half are unable to attend meetings due to health or age-related reasons.

The visitators express their deep gratitude for your hospitality, the excellent organization, and the clear vitality of the Carmelite family, even amidst an uncertain future. Both the friars and the nuns are living through this transition with serenity and realism, acknowledging that the current form of the Carmelite presence in the Netherlands appears to be coming to an end. The Definitory is committed to accompanying them closely throughout this process. To that end, the following decisions have been made: the Semi-Province will become a Commissariat dependent upon the Definitory. The suppression of the Utrecht community is also officially confirmed, as there are no longer friars residing there. Following a request from the Federation of Discalced Carmelite Nuns for closer and more concrete accompaniment, one of the Definitors will be assigned to provide this specific support.

Egypt

Father General has named Fr. Zakaria Harbi as the new Commissary of Egypt, with Fr. Antonius Eskander and Fr. Patrizio Sciadini serving as councilors. Fr. Christophe-Marie participated in the chapter assembly, where they planned for the new triennium. Additionally, Fr. Paolo De Carli assisted Fr. Christophe-Marie with the economic and administrative work.

South Africa

Fr. Philbert Namphande conducted the general pastoral visitation to the South African mission (which belongs to the Province of Karnataka-Goa) from April 1 to April 18, 2026. This mission started in 1998, and it currently includes two communities: Cape Town (3 friars), which administers the Shrine of Mimosa and several parishes, and Benoni (4 friars). The Archdiocese deeply appreciates the presence of these religious men, who provide spiritual retreats and collaborate in major seminaries and the formation of permanent deacons. They publish the annual *Springs of Carmel* (a collection of readings and reflections used throughout South Africa and neighboring countries), as well as concise books on catechesis and the sacraments.

Moving forward, it would be beneficial to improve communication and regular contact between the two communities through an annual assembly and shared permanent formation. We recommend analyzing perspectives for consolidation and evaluating the potential opening of new communities.

Fr. Philbert also visited the monasteries of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Cape Town and Benoni. The closure of the monastery of Mafikeng in Kimberley was officially finalized, and the last three sisters were successfully relocated — two to Benoni and one to Tindinyo, Kenya.

Uganda

The mission in Uganda, which falls under the jurisdiction of the California Province, underwent its pastoral visitation from May 1 to May 8, 2026, led by Fr. Philbert Namphande. This mission, established in 2002, is currently centered at the Duruelo formation house in Jinja. It is a notably young and numerous community of 18 members, comprising all stages of formation from postulants to solemnly professed friars. While community life is generally positive, the housing of all members in a single residence has generated some friction.

There is a critical need for the presence of "older brothers" from the Mother Province to guide the younger members. The premature departure of Californian friars due to health reasons has left the mission in a vulnerable state. Furthermore, there is a near-total financial dependency on California, as pastoral work in Uganda generates limited income.

Given these circumstances, it is necessary to strengthen formation by appointing a student master who prioritizes the accompaniment of the youth over all other activities. It would also be beneficial for lay brothers to specialize in trades such as mechanics, carpentry, or psychology to bolster the mission's self-sufficiency. Additionally, more stringent financial controls are required.

Fr. Philbert also visited the monastery of the nuns in Mityana during his trip.

Iberian Province

The Chapter of the Iberian Province has diligently submitted a detailed report regarding the implementation of the conclusions from last year's general pastoral visitation.

Requests for Financial Assistance

As is our custom, we have analyzed various requests for financial assistance to which we respond directly. We especially favor requests to cover the expenses of initial formation and for circumscriptions in regions of need, provided they present projects that are well-elaborated and supported by their respective major superiors.

The Extraordinary Definitory

During these days we have continued the preparations for the Extraordinary Definitory which will take place from August 30 (arrival) to September 9 (departure) in Mexico City. The official convocation was sent last March 30. Participants will receive in the following days details of the meetings and practical information for the trip and lodging. It will be an excellent opportunity for the new superiors of the circumscriptions to meet each other and share information, concerns and criteria so as to serve the Order better.

Regarding the content of the meeting, there will be an initial reflection by the Father General on the state of the Order, followed by a brief presentation on the current situation in various areas of our life and activity throughout the world. Our focus will be directed toward the General Chapter of 2027, which must address topics such as our charismatic lifestyle, formation, the restructuring of circumscriptions, and the sense of mission and missions for the Order, among others.

An important part of the meeting was dedicated to training and dialogue on how those called to service within the Order should exercise authority. It will provide both principles and practical applications regarding the various areas of responsibility for those in charge of the circumscriptions.

The General Curia

Procurator General

The Procurator General, Fr. Juan David Noguera, recently informed the Definitory regarding updates on various processes and cases involving friars of the Order. We would like to remind everyone that his primary function is to serve as the official liaison between the Order and the Holy See, including the various dicasteries of the Roman Curia. His specific tasks and responsibilities include: managing procedures and dispensations for the Order, Provinces, and individual religious; processing dispensations from vows, religious leaving the Order, and permissions that exceed the authority of the Father General; serving as an intermediary with Vatican offices, specifically the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DIVCSVA) and the Secretariat of State; advising the General Government on juridical matters.

Postulator General

Fr. Marco Chiesa, Postulator General, recently commented on the latest progress regarding the causes of our saints. Since the beginning of this year, 2026, the Holy Father has promulgated the decree of martyrdom for the Discalced Carmelites Atanasius of the Sacred Heart (Gregorio Aguinagalde Aguirreche), Rupert of the Cross (Ruperto Andueza Larraya), and Maximino of the Virgin of Carmel (Maximino Sáez Martínez), who were included in a group of 80 martyrs from the Diocese of Santander, Spain. Additionally, the Pope has promulgated decrees of heroic virtue for several individuals: María Inmaculada of the Most Holy Trinity (María Gisella Villela), a Discalced Carmelite nun from Brazil; Maria Eletta of Jesus (Caterina Tramazzoli), a Discalced Carmelite nun born in Italy who passed away in Prague, Czech Republic; Maria Teresa of the Most Holy Trinity (Teresa Ysseldijk), of the Congregation of Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, who was born in the Netherlands and passed away in the United States; Jean-Thierry of the Child Jesus and the Passion (Jean-Thierry Ebogo), a Discalced Carmelite Friar from Cameroon.

Regarding the liturgical texts, we are still working on the translations of the Missal and the Lectionary into various languages. In the meantime, the Liturgy of the Hours proper to the Order is already available in several languages via the *iBreviary* mobile application, which can be downloaded for both Android and iPhone.

All materials and news from the Postulator General of the Order can be found on the official website at <https://www.postocd.org/>.

Secretariat for Information

Fr. José Pereira, Secretary for Information, has presented some data about the following that some of the communication channels of the General House have, especially YouTube, where one can find the reflection videos about the reading material on our saints and other audiovisual material. We remind everyone of the main links to access the resources put out by the Secretariat for Information:

Webpage: <https://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CuriaGeneraliziaCS#>

X (former Twitter): <https://x.com/ocdcuria>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@ocdcuria6852>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ocdinform/>

Economy

The General Bursar, Fr. Paolo De Carli, presented the trimestral report to the Definitory regarding various financial aspects concerning the General House. During this session, we specifically discussed the ongoing improvements to the building and infrastructure of the Teresianum, as well as the work at St. Teresa al Corso parish, which is now practically complete.

At the end of June 2026, Fr. Regan D'Souza, from the Province of Karnataka-Goa, will join the community of the General House. Fr. Regan possesses extensive formation and experience in financial auditing and has previously collaborated on financial reviews during

general pastoral visitations. Moving forward, he will be at the service of the general government in Rome.

Missionary Cooperation

Fr. Jerome Paluku presented to the Definitory an overview of the contributions received by the Secretariat for Missionary Cooperation during this sexennium. The income is sourced from the circumscriptions of the Order, the nuns, and individual donations. However, the larger sums destined for the financing of missionary projects are provided by various cooperation agencies.

Notably, significant contributions have been received from the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). Recently, we had the opportunity to welcome Fr. Gabriele Pipinato, Director of CEI Projects; we sincerely thank him for the spirit of mutual collaboration that continues to produce such good fruit.

Discalced Carmelite Nuns

We have been in dialogue with Fr. Rafał Wilkowski and John Paul Patiño regarding several topics concerning our Discalced Carmelite nuns.

One of the primary focuses has been the revision process of the *1991 Constitutions* and the recent activities of the International Commission. Last May, the Commission met in person for three weeks in Avila, where they analyzed all the input received from the federations and associations regarding the proposed index. They also took steps toward establishing criteria and methodology for drafting the text of the *Constitutions*. Father General, who serves as the president of the Commission by order of the Dicastery, convened an online meeting on June 17 to inform the federal councils, provincials, and federation assistants about the current status of the process.

Furthermore, we have been informed that the federations and associations of monasteries following the *1990 Constitutions* have received instructions from the Dicastery on how to proceed with the revision of their document.

The Secular Carmel

Fr. Ramiro Casale, Delegate to the Carmelite Secular Order, recently reported on the visits he made over the past several weeks to our communities in Argentina, Chile, and the Naples region (Puglia). We also reviewed several provincial statutes currently in development.

The world census for the Secular Order has now been completed. According to the gathered data, there are 25,520 Secular Carmelites worldwide who have made either definitive or temporary promises. Furthermore, approximately 7,000 additional individuals are currently in the initial incorporation process.

Regarding the upcoming World Congress in Avila in July 2026, final preparations are underway to welcome nearly 900 expected participants. It will undoubtedly be a unique

experience of communion for the Secular Carmel and the entire Order. Detailed information is available at <https://ocdsavila2026.com/>.

As we conclude the Definitory meeting, a summer of intense activity stands before us, marked by events of great spiritual and institutional relevance for our Order. Among these, several key gatherings stand out: the International Congress on St. John of the Cross, which will take place at the end of this month at the Teresianum in Rome and at CITEs in Avila; the upcoming OCDS World Congress in Avila at the end of July; and the Extraordinary Definitory, planned for the beginning of September in Mexico with the participation of the new superiors of circumscriptions.

As we prepare to celebrate the upcoming feasts of Carmel, we confidently invoke Mary, Mother and Sister of Carmelites. May she sustain and encourage us in our everyday journey of fidelity to Jesus Christ, who has called us to follow him and to live our vocation within the heart of the Teresian Carmel family.

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