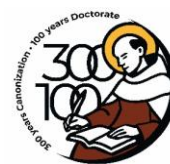




GENERAL DEFINITORY
OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES
Corso d'Italia, 38
00198 Rome – Italy



**Saint John
of the Cross
2026**

Sexennium 2021 – 2027– Letter N° 21

Rome, September 24, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in the Teresian Carmel:

The General Definitory held its trimestral meeting in Rome from September 14th to the 23rd. It took place a few days after the Extraordinary Definitory, which was held in Mexico City from August 30th to September 9th with the participation of provincial superiors and other delegates. On behalf of the whole Order, we thank the Province of Mexico for their fraternal welcome and the great work they undertook to prepare for the event.

The General Definitory

One of the main topics of our dialogue has been precisely the Extraordinary Definitory. The assessment of the event is very positive. In it, the superiors of the different circumscriptions were able to get to know each other and share valuable information, concerns, and criteria to serve the Order better.

We regret that, for various reasons, some of those convoked were not able to participate in the Extraordinary Definitory. We invite all to become aware of the importance of these encounters for the life of the Order and to assume with responsibility the duty of participating in them, which is an essential part of the service all are entrusted to give.

Regarding the content of the meeting, the General offered his vision on the state of the Order in a concise presentation about our current life and activity across the world. He highlighted both areas of hope and situations of concern. The General Bursar then presented a summary of the financial situation of the Order and its circumscriptions, along with several considerations regarding the proper management of goods.

Most of the encounter was dedicated to formation and dialogue about exercising the service of authority in the Order. Various religious offered practical principles and applications for the different areas of responsibility held by circumscription superiors: government style, economy, canonical procedures, and relationship with the nuns and the OCDS. The material presented is currently being compiled into a document that will be published in multiple languages for the use of superiors.

Towards the 2027 General Chapter

The participants of the Extraordinary Definitory had the opportunity to share their impressions and proposals in view of the upcoming General Chapter, which will take place in Nemi (Italy) from May 3 to May 23, 2027. The official convocation will be issued in the coming weeks with details regarding the participants and the topics to be discussed.

During these days, the General Definitory has specified some fundamental elements for the General Chapter. The focus will be on the missionary dimension and missionary discernment under the dual criteria of identity and mission; that is, the identity and mission of the Discalced Carmelite today, both in terms of internal fidelity—identity and mission—and its projection to the world—*ad extra* mission.

Apart from electing the Superior General and the Definitors, the General Chapter has the mission to “promote the life, unity, and growth of the Order, and to ensure that all the brethren work together for its unceasing renewal” (*OCD Constitutions* 170a), as well as to approve norms and ordinances required for the good of the Order. It is also to “decide on matters concerning the state of the provinces, the setting up of new provinces and the suppression, division or modification of existing ones” (*OCD Constitutions* 170f).

Some circumscriptions have expressed a willingness to become provinces. The Definitory is carefully analyzing the situation of each circumscription to ensure that all necessary spiritual, material, and vocational requirements are met (*OCD Constitutions* 146). In cases where the evaluation is affirmative, the proposal may be presented to the General Chapter, which is the entity that habitually makes these decisions (*OCD Constitutions* 145).

We remind everyone that all provinces, communities, and religious may present their desires and suggestions for consideration by the General Chapter (*Norms* 179).

Priority Topics

As it is customary in our encounters we have dialogued about some priority topics of this sexennium, which is reaching its final stage.

Initial Formation

The process of revising and updating the *Ratio institutionis* over the last few years has come to an end. The final text, prepared by the international commission and revised by the Definitory, was presented during the Extraordinary Definitory in Mexico, where the General Definitory gave it definitive approval. Once translated into the various languages, it will be made known to the entire Order.

The *Ratio institutionis* is a guide containing common elements to be applied in each region according to its specific characteristics, ensuring an adequate inculturation of the Teresian charism. It is a very valuable tool that reminds us of the primordial importance of formation for the Order and for each of its members.

Additionally, the International College in Rome is beginning the new academic year with great vitality and a growing number of students from an increasing number of countries.

Academic and intellectual life

The new academic year starts at the Teresianum, CITEs and the majority of our centers of study. Precisely this year we celebrate the centenary of the beginning of the Order's theological studies in Rome (November 14, 1926). It is a good occasion to give a new impulse to the Order's academic and intellectual life.

Youth Ministry

Following the Definitory's proposal, around twenty delegates and youth ministry leaders from different regions are already in communication and have suggested various initiatives to enrich and better coordinate our work with young people worldwide. A small coordinating group has been formed, consisting of Salvador Gutiérrez (Mexico), Alejandro Soriano (Iberian), Francesco Conte (Venice), Matthias Lambrecht (California), and Moses Choi (Korea).

One of the main objectives is preparing for Carmel's participation in the next World Youth Day (WYD) in Seoul, South Korea, from August 3rd to August 8th, 2027. The host will be the local bishop and our brother Peter Chung. All circumscriptions should have already received some indications and suggestions from our Province in Korea. We ask all Provincials and youth ministry leaders to let us know the anticipated number of young participants from their regions so that we can prepare for the event and celebrate a Carmelite Youth Day during WYD.

Anniversaries

The celebration of the jubilee year of St. John of the Cross continues. Many different events are taking place in numerous locations. The General House has already published eight excerpts of his writings for reading in community, all of which are available on the webpage.

The International Congress took place from June 22nd to the 26th at the Teresianum and CITEs. It featured the participation of well-known world specialists on St. John of the Cross and mysticism in general. Attendance was quite significant, both in person and online, and the presentations were of outstanding quality. The proceedings of the Congress will soon be published in the *Teresianum* magazine.

The jubilee year will officially end on December 27 in Úbeda (Jaén, Spain), with a celebration presided by the Father General.

Life of the Circumscriptions

The Definitory has started the development of the last triennial chapters of the Order's circumscriptions celebrated after our meeting in June. Among them, we mention the Malabar chapter, in which a new provincial government was constituted and the general visitation was concluded.

Continuing with the process of regularization and restructuring that the Order is developing, we have decreed and confirmed the constitution of new commissariats and regional vicariates. In some cases, the corresponding statutes have been drafted. We have approved the statutes of the commissariats of Holland, the Caribbean (with the incorporation of Venezuela), and Japan, as well as those of the regional vicariates of Canada (Karnataka-Goa) and Belarus (Warsaw). The statutes of the new commissariat of Australia and of the regional vicariates of the Central African Republic (Genoa), Sicily (incorporated into Genoa), West Africa (Iberian), and Malawi (Navarre) are currently in progress.

Our Father General reported on his pastoral visit to the delegation of Israel at the beginning of July. The situation of the friars there, who serve in such a singular and significant reality for the Order, remains both complex and delicate. One of the main reasons is the ongoing atmosphere of war in the region, which has also led to a decrease in pilgrims to the Holy Land. The process of renewing the Delegation continues with the incorporation of five new religious. We thank them and their circumscriptions for their generosity and willingness to serve. Likewise, work continues on consolidating the community at the parish in Haifa and supporting the school under our care.

Another matter that has been the object of our attention is the presence of communities of one province in the territory of another circumscription. These presences, which are not according to our legislation, have been reduced in recent years. However, due to diverse circumstances, the Definitory granted as an exception a moratorium to a small number of communities, which will expire in March of 2027. In dialogue with the respective provinces, a decision will be made on how to proceed regarding the incorporation of these communities into the local province or their closure.

The Province of Central Italy has decided to reorganize its presence in the city of Rome. From now on, it maintains the communities of St. Teresa in Panfilo and St. Pancrazio (the latter with the help of religious from Karnataka-Goa). The houses of Santa Maria della Vittoria and La Scala will be directly under the General Definitory.

We have accepted the petition from the Province of Karnataka-Goa to canonically erect the house of Mapusa (Goa), as well as to begin a new community in Old Goa, next to the site of the Order's first presence in India.

Financial Help Requests

As is customary, we have analyzed various requests for financial help to which we respond directly. We especially favor applications destined for initial formation and for presences in regions in need, provided they present well-developed projects that are supported by the local major superiors. We also give preference to circumscriptions that are working hard to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

Likewise, we have decided to launch an Order-wide campaign of information and appeal for help for the Province of Colombia. It has recently suffered the devastating effects of earthquakes and now needs to rebuild its churches, which have been seriously damaged. We are all called to express our solidarity and closeness in concrete ways toward our brothers undergoing difficult situations, as we have done and continue to do with Ukraine, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, and other regions.

The General Curia

Procurator General

Our Procurator General, Fr. Juan David Noguera, has presented updated information to the Definitory regarding recent progress in various canonical procedures for friars of the Order, along with a detailed account of the status of each current case. As was emphasized during the Extraordinary Definitory, it is essential for those responsible for circumscriptions to act with diligence and seriousness in this area. The necessary guidelines for correctly and efficiently managing these cases can be found in the Procurator General section of the General House website.

Postulator General

Together with Fr. Marco Chiesa, Postulator General, we have examined the revision process of the Secular Order's Ritual, which continues to advance in dialogue with the competent Dicastery. We focused especially on the formula for promises, which needs to be updated in light of the contemporary theology of the lay life. The modification of this formula will proceed without waiting for the revision of the Constitutions, although that should also be undertaken in the near future.

Economy

The General Bursar, Fr. Paolo De Carli, presented the quarterly report on the administration of the entities under the General House to the Definitory. He completed the data that he had begun presenting to the participants of the Extraordinary Definitory in Mexico.

Missionary Collaboration

We have spoken with Fr. Jérôme Paluku regarding the entities that support the Order's missionary and development projects. Currently, the most notable collaboration is the support we receive from the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). Fr. Jérôme also shared the positive experience he had participating in the formation meetings of several growing and consolidating African circumscriptions.

Fiamma Viva Foundation

Coinciding with the Definitory meetings, the assembly of the "Fondazione Fiamma Viva ETS"—which is dependent on the Order—took place. The assembly revised the administrative procedures associated with the constitution and the foundation's activity over the past year. They then evaluated the provisional version of the entity's new website.

A significant part of the discussion focused on the transition of the Roman convents of Santa Maria della Scala and Santa Maria della Vittoria from the jurisdiction of the Central Italian Province to that of the Order's General Definitory. They also discussed the possibilities, conditions, and ways for the Foundation to assume the management of the art and museum aspects of both sites, as well as the old pharmacy of La Scala. Likewise, they examined the convenience of incorporating collaborators or volunteers—in a modality still to be defined—who would guarantee the development of ordinary activities and the follow-up of current projects.

Discalced Carmelite Nuns

We have spoken with Fr. Rafał Wilkowski and Juan Pablo Patiño about the revision process of the *Constitutions (1991)* and the activity of the international commission. On June 17, an online session was organized by the Father General as president of the commission to inform the federal councils, provincials, and religious assistants of federations around the world about the current state of the process.

Likewise, we know that the federations and associations of monasteries following the *1990 Constitutions* have received indications from the Dicastery regarding the process for revising their text. The presidents of these federations and associations have already initiated contact to begin the process.

Similarly, we have dialogued about the situation of certain monasteries facing moments of difficulty and uncertainty, whether due to a lack of vocations or other reasons.

Secular Carmel (OCDS)

Fr. Ramiro Casale, delegate for the Secular Carmel, joyfully shared the successful celebration of the World Encounter of the OCDS, which took place from July 23rd to 26th. The event gathered nine hundred Secular Carmelites from around eighty countries, along with a large number of religious. Fr. Miguel Márquez, Superior General, inaugurated the event by highlighting the unity of the Order and presenting challenges such as communication, humility, and government as an act of service. During the following days, there were presentations on topics such as community belonging, formation, pastoral care, Teresian community, prayer, fraternity and communion, and mission as creative fidelity. Fr. Ramiro Casale reflected on the past and future of the OCDS and shared the results of a global questionnaire. There were also festive moments of celebration. The event culminated with pilgrimages to Teresian and Sanjuanist sites (Ávila, Alba de Tormes, Segovia, Medina del Campo, and Duruelo) and a closing Mass in the cathedral of Ávila.

The Definitory has approved the statutes of the Secular Order of Canada (English-speaking zone). Meanwhile, the long and laborious process of *sanatio in radice* continues for cases in which the definitive promises of Secular Carmelites were not made according to current legislation. In dialogue with the Dicastery, the specific process to be followed is slowly being finalized.

At the conclusion of the Definitory, the Father General and several definitors will travel to Paris to participate in the inauguration of the new friary, as well as Pope Leo XIV's visit to the city. Specifically, they will attend the event at the former site of the St. Joseph convent, where Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection lived in the 17th century. Well known for practicing and spreading the practice of the presence of God, Brother Lawrence has been cited by the Pope on various occasions.

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the pontifical recognition of the Carmelite Rule through the letter *Ut vivendi normam* of Pope Honorius III, dated January 1226. For this reason, a

celebration for the Carmelite families is scheduled for November 28 at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, as well as a visit from our Definitory and the Carmelite General Council (O. Carm.) to the Pope on December 2. Both Generals have signed a joint letter regarding this anniversary, published on September 17, the feast of St. Albert of Jerusalem, the patriarch who gave the first rule of life to the hermits of Mount Carmel.

We invite the whole Order to celebrate with joy on October 15 the solemnity of St. Teresa of Jesus, renewing our gratitude for the gift of her life and charism. May this celebration move us to follow her example and teaching with renewed fidelity, growing in prayer, fraternity, and service to the Church.

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