



Flos Carmeli

Applicants wanted for Central Office Administrator post

By the Provincial Council

The Provincial Council is pleased to announce that we are now accepting resumes for the position of Central Office Administrator. Professed members of Canonical Communities and Study Groups who desire to apply are encouraged to email your resume to the email address listed at the end of this article by **November 30, 2011** along with three (3) references: two (2) business references (non-related to you) and one (1) from your pastor. Please include references' contact information: names, cell/work/and home phone numbers, postal and email addresses. Community/Study Group members who have the listed computer experience, good organizational skills, Carmelite charisma, the ability to be a team player and retain confidential information, and who have made either their First or Definitive Promise should be encouraged by their Communities or Study Groups to apply before the deadline. This salaried part-time position will involve a maximum of 15-20 hours per week working from the comforts of your home with a flexible schedule

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and you will have the added satisfaction of knowing that you are benefitting your Province and your brothers and sisters in Carmel tremendously. Contact with the Provincial Council and Provincial Delegate will be mostly by email.

RECOMMENDED COMPUTER SKILLS

Database Management System Software (DBMS) (e.g., Access, SQL Server, Oracle, etc.)
Microsoft Word
Microsoft Excel
Microsoft Powerpoint
Microsoft Outlook
Website design, redesign and maintenance
Ability to catalog, file, and post Community / Study Group / Provincial Council records and email onto secure databases, the Provincial website, or on the secure Provincial Council website

RECORD MAINTENANCE

Rosters of Communities/ Study Groups/ Groups in Discernment (G.I.D.)
Rosters of Isolates
Maintain permanent records for Communities / Study Groups (Clothings, Promises, Vows, Release of Promise).
Maintain local Council Directories for Communities / Study Groups.
Keep record of email addresses for “Flos Carmeli” mailing and assist with distribution PC Roster

FINANCE RECORDS

Record dues from Communities / Study Groups.
Receive Annual Financial Statements from Communities / Study Groups.
Dispense checks for PC expenses as well as those of the Provincial Delegate.
Maintain bank account.
IRS Tax Report
Annual PC Budget Report
Maintain financial records from Regional / National Congresses hosted by our Province

VISITATIONS

Send letters of notification re: Visitation to Communities and Study Groups. (January)
Record assignments of Visitation.
File and post visitation reports onto PC website

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Central Office Administrator post cont.

INQUIRIES

**Direct inquiries from prospective members, transfers, province to province, TOCs, Isolates, Communities / Study Groups / G.I.D. to appropriate Provincial Council member.
Maintain confidentiality and privacy**

WORKSHOPS/RETREATS

**Compile list of OCDS speakers' lists/topics.
Contact speakers.
Search for and initiate contact with facilities / hotels.
Publicize workshops/retreats.
Maintain registry and financial records.
Make and post annual financial report.**

"FLOS CARMELI"

**Maintain email addresses for individuals.
Maintain archives of past publications.
Publish Death Notices.
Publish photos and Community/Study Group/ G.I.D. information.
Compile data from surveys.**

RESOURCE MATERIALS

**Current books and articles
Spanish Promise Documents
Web Site and Links
Maintain inventory/ take orders for OCDS Legislation books**

Please direct questions and email your resume (with two business references and one from your pastor) by November 30, 2011 to Provincial Council contact: Mary Kay Daniels, OCDS mkdocds@cableone.net. Interviews are scheduled to begin in January. Thank you in advance for applying!

Provincial Delegate's Report

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

Closing the House in New Orleans

Perhaps the most significant change made in the Province following our Chapter this past June was the closing of our student house in New Orleans and the transfer of our student community to San Antonio. In this report I wish to offer a few stray thoughts about the closing of this house, which occupied a good part of my attention especially in August.

By the end of July Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, who since 2005 had served as student director and superior of the house in New Orleans, had finished tying up loose ends with the various accounts needed to run the house and then moved himself and his things to his new assignment at Marylake. A few weeks later, in early August, our three students—Brs. Juan Guillermo, Bradley, and Jorge—drove over from San Antonio and, together with Fr. Gregory Ross, our new student director, who had yet to move himself from New Orleans to San Antonio, packed up the things we were planning to take with us from the house. These included quite a few boxes of books, a number of framed prints and photographs, and a collection of statues, all wrapped in bubble wrap for protection, sundry sacristy items and vestments, a roomful of exercise equipment, another roomful of computers, printers, and a copier, and a few other items—like a coffee maker, for example, and a digital piano. Most of the furniture and kitchen utensils in the house we left behind. We had been renting the house from the archdiocese through the years, and such things as the furniture and utensils we left either had come with the house when we moved in or had been purchased by us to replace items that had been there at the start.

Having completed the initial task of packing up our things, Fr. Gregory and our three students then returned to San Antonio. They took with them most of Fr. Gregory's things but left the packed items—the books, the statues, etc.—neatly stacked and ready to go for later. The plan was for them to return on Labor Day weekend with a rental truck in order to load everything in and haul it away. In the meantime I stayed on alone in the house, feeling quite alone, a reminder that, while I may be a celibate, I'm not really a bachelor, nor a hermit, at heart. I missed the fellowship of my brothers.

The New Orleans OCDS community was able have their monthly meeting at our house on Sunday, August 14. They've met there for some years now. This meeting, then, was their last in this locale. It also happened to be the weekend of their visitation, conducted by Henrietta Albright and Dorothy Ashley. I was away until Sunday evening giving a retreat, but did manage to return to be able to celebrate mass in our chapel with the New Orleans council and the two visitators on Monday, August 15, the feast of the Assumption. It was a fitting, although sad way to bring to a close this long association between our presence in New Orleans and that of the Secular Order. After mass the council and visitators held their follow-up meeting in which together they reviewed the recommendations of the visitators. I joined them for some of this meeting, but had to leave early in order to go to the hospital and undergo a bone

Provincial Delegate's report cont.

scan, a strange procedure if ever there was one.

A few days later our own Provincial Council gathered at the house in New Orleans for a final meeting there. In this instance by Provincial Council I mean the council of the friars. It consists of Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, our Provincial, as is to be expected, along with four other friars elected at our Provincial Chapter. These other friars are Fr. Stephen Sanchez, Fr. Ralph Reyes, Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte, and myself. Thus far since the Chapter in June we have met on a monthly basis. Our meetings last a couple of days. Like your own council meetings, we address all manner of things having to do with the life and work of the Province, its organization and finances, the formation of new vocations, the general well-being of the friars, and our faithfulness as Carmelites to our call.

By the way, at our most recent Provincial Council meeting, which was held September 21-22 in San Antonio, I gave a brief report, at the request of the Provincial, on how the Secular Order is doing in the Province. I spoke about the OCDS Provincial Council and how well they are working together, with the new members learning the

The Provincial Council is conducting a review to see just where province expenses might be reduced. For example, sending out the Flos Carmeli electronically would save considerable in printing and mailing costs. These savings could then be applied elsewhere in helping to manage the central office. There are perhaps other ways we might reorder and readjust expenses

ropes with ease. I gave a quick overview of the many OCDS communities in the Province and of a few developments among some of them. I updated the Council (of the friars, that is) of the progress that has been made towards setting up the position of an OCDS Provincial Secretary in the Province. You can read about this progress elsewhere in this issue of the *Flos Carmeli*. In fact, as you will see, the OCDS Provincial Council is, in this very issue, soliciting applications for the position.

Let me interject here a word of thanks to all of you who responded to my request for feedback regarding the increase in dues necessary to finance this new position. As I mentioned in answer to those of you whom I heard from, your response has been most generous. You see the need and are willing to do what you can, to the extent that you can, to help meet it. I am moved by your dedication. No final decision has yet been made on precisely how much an increase in dues we may need. The Provincial Council is conducting a review to see just where province expenses might be reduced. For example, sending out

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the Flos Carmeli electronically would save considerable in printing and mailing costs. These savings could then be applied elsewhere in helping to manage the central office. There are perhaps other ways we might reorder and readjust expenses.

Returning to the saga of the closing of the house in New Orleans—so, we finished our Provincial Council meeting and the other friars of the Council departed, leaving me alone once again in the house. Then, a couple of weeks later, Labor Day weekend arrived when the students were supposed to come and cart off the last of our things, including my own belongings. But Tropical Storm Lee blew in that weekend and, with it, out went our plans. The students decided to put off the trip till the following weekend. For my part I weathered out the storm, then loaded up my car with as much of my personal things as I could fit—leaving the rest for the students to bring later—and on Tuesday, September 6, gave the house a final walk-through, said good-bye to these four walls that had seen so much of us through the years, got into my car, and drove off in the direction of San Antonio. The moment had for me the feel of the end of an era.

It was in August of 1993 that, as a relatively newly ordained priest, I first drove from San Antonio to New Orleans to open this house as our new student house on the grounds of Notre Dame Seminary. To reverse that trip these 18 years later seemed, in a manner of speaking, to encapsulate for me all that had transpired over these years both in my own life and in the life of our Province. Thus, there was a dose of nostalgia in the moment as well as a measure of sadness and loss and a letting go of what now lies irretrievably in the past.

That sentiment is true for many others in our Province as well. It has been for us an excruciating decision to close this house. Yet, when all is said and done, it is the right decision. The constraints of not just personnel but finances demand it. Moreover, making this particular very difficult decision has given us as a Province the determination to make other difficult decisions as needed, all towards the end of improving the setting in which we live out our vocation. So, we pray that the loss may, in God's providence, become a gain. And I ask your prayers as well—for us, for new vocations to our Province, for our financial needs, which are great, and above all for the human and spiritual maturity each of us is called to by our vocation.

Report of the Provincial Council

For this issue of the Flos Carmeli ,the Report of the Provincial Council will have a different format. Each Provincial Council member has been asked to provide a brief reflection on his or her experience as a PC member for the last few months. What have been the impressions of serving on the PC? Attending the Congress? Making visitations or shadowing visitations? Their responses follow.

Henrietta Albright: My reflections on serving on the PC for the past few months start with the PC Orientation meeting in June in San Antonio. In addition to getting to know the new PC members we had the joy and pleasure of visiting with all the friars at the Chapter Meeting. One of the things we plan for the future issues of the Flos Carmeli is pictures and biographical articles about the friars.

The Congress was wonderful. Not only did we get reacquainted with Seculars we had met on visitations and at workshops I was able to attend the Interprovincial meetings and get to know Fr. Donald Kenney, Provincial from the Arizona/California Province and PC members from both the west and eastern provinces. The Interprovincial Council replaces the former National Council.

In August new PC member Dorothy Ashley and I made the New Orleans visitation. This was particularly touching in that this would be the last meeting the community would hold in the St. John of the Cross House of Studies. After I returned home I realized I should have taken a picture of the boxes stacked to the ceiling waiting for the “Student Movers” to transfer them to San Antonio.

In September another new PC member, Chris Wood, and I made the visitation to the San Antonio community. Every community should be as blessed as San Antonio. Not only do they meet at the Basilica of the Little Flower which is absolutely beautiful, but the majority of friars and the students are now in residence there as well as a community of our nuns. San Antonio starts their formation cycle in September and we were amazed that there were nine aspirants starting formation. Check out their new website <http://sanantonio-ocds.org>. I anticipate that with the dedicated formation team in San Antonio and the collaboration of the friars we shall see some wonderful articles on Carmelite spirituality on this site.

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PC Report cont.

Dorothy Ashley: “A Holy Whirlwind” is the phrase I would use to describe how my life has been since I was elected to the Provincial Council. Jesus is always with me throughout the whirlwind. Even when I can't feel his presence, my faith tells me He is there. My “holy whirlwind” was caused by a compilation of personal circumstances which began oddly enough with my first month as a Councilor and continues even to this day as I am tossed about, seek God's will in my life, pray for and serve my Province and its members. My path has been tumultuous, but, nothing that God has not given me the grace through PRAYER to handle.....Election to Provincial Council.... ”Congratulations!” from outgoing members and many well wishers.... PRAYER.....travelled to first PC meeting in San Antonio where new bonds of friendship took root with the other Councilors, Fr. Bonaventure and the friars as did the gleanings of comprehension of the awesome responsibility the PC has to the Province.....PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING....returned home...experienced the shocking effects of a dad with worsening Alzheimer's.....PRAYER.....Cousin moves in with dad . “Thank you, Lord!”....an awe-inspiring OCDS Congress in Lafayette where I once again received spiritual nourishment, experienced and reciprocated the love, prayers and well-wishes of our larger Carmelite family.....PRAYER...returned home to a shriveling marriage.....PRAYER.....”WHY LORD??? What went wrong?”.....”Holy Mother Teresa and St. Joseph, pray for us!”..... Dad needs me...only child... PRAYER..... resigned my job to take care of dad and manage his small lawn-care business (of which I know nothing)....”Show me the way, Lord!”... PRAYER.....PC emails fly back and forth.....dad's doctor's visits.....PRAYER.....tired now, Lord!PRAYER.....”So, dad's worker quit?!!! What now, Lord? Guide me, please!”....up and down the highway for that 2 hour drive between my house and dad's.....PRAY WHILE DRIVING.....on the road again....PRAYER.....my first “visitation” shadowing Henrietta in New Orleans.... PRAYER.....met and fellowshiped with a lovely community, ate GOOD in the Crescent City.....PRAYER.....returned home....PRAYER.....spiritual direction re: shriveling marriage.....”St. Monica, how did you do it?”.....PRAYER...voted by email as a Council on a candidate from a Study Group who is seeking to make her First Promise....emails to resolve a Council question....PRAYER IN SOLITUDE....PRAYER FOR OUR PROVINCE AND COUNCIL..... ..”What trouble is my son in NOW???”.....on the road again.....Baton Rouge Community visitation.....”Thank you Lord for the gift of Community and for the love and care they have for one another”.....met so many more people who blessed and inspired me with their love of Carmel and promises to pray for us, the Provincial Council. “Bless them too, Lord and thank you for this apartment to myself while I am here”.....on the road again.....taking daddy to the doctor again.... PRAYER.....”Thank you, Saints of Carmel! Thank you, Blessed Mother!”.....gotta finish writing those articles for the” Flos Carmeli”.....PRAYER.... Someone's been “watering” our marriage....looks like we WILL be celebrating our 31st anniversary TOGETHER in October.... PRAYER.... Silent Retreat begins tomorrow in Mobile.....YEAH!!! Need that time and space.....”THANK YOU JESUS FOR NOT LETTING GO OF ME IN THE WHIRLWIND!”

PC Report cont.

Mary Kay Daniels: Grace and peace to you in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

There hasn't been a day, since I officially started serving as a PC member that I haven't prayed for the well being of and God's loving guidance for everyone in our Province. When I accepted the responsibility of the Provincial Council, I profoundly realized how this was God's assignment for me for right now, and that all I want is to do His Will in His Way and in His Timing, for our Province. I've done much more praying than ever before, for our whole team – for our Provincial Delegate, Father Bonaventure, and for the Friars and Nuns, and for my colleagues on the PC, especially when they travel. (I have yet to travel to shadow for a Visitation and will have shadowed in Knoxville, TN, by the time this newsletter is printed. At this point I so look forward to getting to know every person in that community.) I pray daily particularly for the communities I know I am going to visit. So the members from the Austin Community have been a focus for me too, as I prepare to join them in November. I am comforted by knowing in my viscera (just a gentler word than guts) that Our Lord knows my passion to see the beauty of Carmel thrive in its truth and grace and how so very much I want His merciful love to permeate the world.

For my first time meeting with the PC, I participated in a most informative weekend in San Antonio in June, where I began to study the PC Manual, so well put together by our former PC President, Elizabeth Korves and the previous PC. I hold a strong respect for all of our predecessors on the PC because the organizational work they accomplished is outstanding. It was a joy to meet the new PC! Immediately I was impressed by the sincerity, dedication, personal goodness, positive energy and resourcefulness of my colleagues. I felt I couldn't possibly be with a better group of folks to work with. I am delighted by how different our gifts are and how complementary we are to each other.

The next event was our Congress in Lafayette, LA, which was an outstanding experience, a real testimony of flowing graces and goodness that comes when people who work for the Lord work in harmony with Him and with each other. The tremendous effort made by the Lafayette communities was inspirational as every detail of the conference was tended to so mindfully. And the joy and warmth of the loving hospitality to all of us by our hostessing communities was touching.

At the Congress, I greatly enjoyed meeting Seculars throughout our Province. I remain grateful for my three sisters who so spontaneously and generously insisted upon praying with me and for me for safe travel home as I shared my concern about traveling back up to Sioux City, IA, location of where the Missouri River flooded massively this summer, such that major roads en route to my home from the Omaha Airport were closed. In the purest, most loving Spirit of the Lord, my sisters in Carmel sent me off with a spontaneous blessing that I will always hold in my heart. I was overwhelmed by all of the good folks I met, the excellent inputs from the speakers, the beautiful liturgies and rich moments of praise and prayer and the fullness of Our Lord's Presence among us. For those of you who couldn't attend, I prayed that you would experience all of the wonderful graces Our Lord poured out to our provincial community at that time, wherever you happened to have been, as we are all one in Christ's Spirit. I wholeheartedly encourage you to attend our next triennial Congress to be held in 2014.

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PC Report cont.

(Mary Kay Daniels cont.) So, besides praying big-time in preparation for my first upcoming Visitations, I've been organizing PC files, learning the computer system the PC uses, reading visitation reports written by the pros (the PC members who stayed on from the last group, may God bless them for their hard work and perseverance), studying and advising in discernment situations, and corresponding via e-mail with my colleagues regarding various issues. I've written a few articles for the *Flos* and I look forward to being the contact person to answer questions and helping to facilitate the information flow regarding the new part-time central office position. I will be collecting resumes for those interested in the position. Please join me in prayer for the right person to be in that position.

From here on, it's where and how our Holy Spirit leads me to be and to do in the PC and wherever. Please pray for me, as I do for you. May the Peace of the Lord be with you and bless you richly.

Dorothy Mansen: So many wonderful blessings were received by all at the Congress. Besides being blessed with all the wonderful inspiring conferences my greatest blessings was seeing so many of you that I have met in the last three years I have served on the Provincial Council visiting over a dozen communities, study groups and groups in discernment. My worse moments on visitations are when I have to say goodbye to all my brothers and sisters in Carmel that I have just met not knowing when I would see them again. For the past two years or so, I have been able to forget saying goodbye because I was able to say "See you at the Congress". What a joy that was too, to see you all again.

My time since the Congress has been very busy preparing for the Waco visitation in July and the Georgetown visitation in September, answering numerous inquiries, writing reports, composing two conference talks for my next two visitations. For a short while I was asked to keep the financial records for the OCDS province. Right now I am preparing for two more visitations in October. With all of this I can't even come close to what our Holy Mother St. Teresa did to serve the Order. She has been such an inspiration to me in my moments of weakness. As I have said before, unlike St. Teresa, I have never had to sneak in to a town at night, ride a donkey or sleep on a bed of straw. This is thanks to all our generous and hospitable members.

Now instead of saying see you at the Congress I can say, "Hope I see you at one of the Workshops next spring!"

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PC Report cont.

Chris Wood: Thinking back on the day that Elizabeth called me with the news that I had been elected to the Provincial Council, I remember having mixed emotions. A sense of gratitude that our Lord would entrust me with the task of serving the Order in this way but, also a strong feeling of anxiety about what the road ahead would bring. Am I prepared for these responsibilities? Can I order my schedule in such a way that I'll have ample time to carry out the many duties? Do I have the energy?

Well, after just a few months of being on the council, I can honestly say that there is more joy than toil...more inspiration than discouragement...and more peace than anxiety! It is indeed an honor to work alongside my fellow councilors. We met together for the first time in San Antonio during the friar's general chapter and we hit it off right away. Even though there was so much to learn, Henrietta and Dorothy Mansen still managed to mix in prayer time, Mass, eating out and visiting the Spanish Missions on Sunday afternoon. It was indeed a great joy to spend several hours with Father Bonaventure and other friars over the course of the weekend and to learn so much about the inner workings of our great Order!

Following this Provincial Council meeting, were the many messages sent back and forth through email and the Yahoo Group website to discuss OCDS business, make our deliberations, plan for future activities, and general support of each other in our efforts to serve. And the messages go on ... and on ... and on often late into the night!

As time neared for the Regional Congress at the end of June, I was excited about getting to meet many fellow members of our Province and the Order. I had my plans all laid out to arrive in time for my first Interprovincial Council meeting, Plenary Council meeting, and the Congress itself. But alas, my initial concern that unforeseen schedule changes would prevent me from carrying out my duties came true. I was not able to attend. I spent that weekend thinking and praying for all those who did. I was later pleased to hear that the event was a joyous occasion filled with many blessed moments. I give praise to our Lord as well, for despite the unforeseen circumstances that weekend, he granted me his blessings anyway!

Next up was my trip to the Alamo City as a guest visitator to the San Antonio community. Henrietta provided the coaching and the community members were gracious and patient with the newbie! Henrietta and I arrived on Friday evening each staying with a member of the community. I stayed at the home of Jim and Juany Conner who, with their lovely family, provided a gracious and comfortable stay for

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me.

Early Saturday morning we were fast about our business; meeting with the local council, interviewing various members, and later enjoying a great lunch at a nearby Mexican restaurant. On Saturday evening we were invited to dinner at the home of one of the community members, Isabel Quesnell. We shared a terrific home cooked Asian meal with the local council. Sunday our day began with a beautiful Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower, followed by lunch with the OCDS community and the monthly meeting. The meeting ended with Evening Prayer recited in community.

When the meetings were over, Henrietta and I went off to write down our observations and began preparing the Visitation Report. One of the local councilors, and Henrietta's host for the weekend, Therese Luderus, was so gracious as to provide us with a place to work and prepared a delicious fish dinner for us, which we ate on her patio. The visit concluded on Monday morning after a final meeting with the local council, where we discussed our observations and recommendations.

Meeting the wonderful members of the San Antonio community, observing firsthand the great things they are accomplishing to serve the Lord and His Church, and seeing some of the ways in which I can serve the Order has been the highlight of my time on the Provincial Council to date.

Next up... is my first solo visit to our Alexandria, LA community in November! For me, a trip home of sorts as I spent twelve years living and working in New Orleans and Baton Rouge... "Laissez Les Bon Temps Roulez"!

Councilor spring workshop set

As President or Director of Formation, or as Council member, have you ever been challenged by a discernment situation? Ever feel a lump in your throat or a knot in your stomach while experiencing a disagreement and wish to develop skills in dealing with tough conversations, when surviving a difference of opinion is not enough?

These are just a couple of the practical and necessary items that will be addressed by a special presentation from Provincial Council members for Community and Study Group Presidents and Directors of Formation at the upcoming duplicate workshops.

The Spring Workshop will begin at 4 p.m. Thursday, April 19, 2012, and will end with lunch on Sunday, April 22. It will be held at the Cenacle Retreat House in Houston. The Cenacle Retreat House is located at 420 N. Kirkwood Road in Houston, which is a straight shot off I-10. Accommodations accessible to persons with disabilities are available.

Since space is limited, only the first 30 people who sign up will be accepted. A waiting list will be created as necessary. The cost per attendee is \$300. The fee provides a private room with a hall bathroom and meals.

To register, please contact Dorothy Mansen by **March 1, 2012**, and send a non-refundable deposit of \$125 to her home address:

Dorothy Mansen
2500 Lakewood Dr.
Grand Prairie, TX 75054

1dot-and2bob@sbcglobal.net

Another workshop, which will offer the same content, will be held in the Atlanta area. The date of that workshop has not been set.

Past workshops have been very successful and have empowered resourcefulness for dynamic Councils, healthy community sustenance and the joyful experience of getting to know our larger Carmelite family. Information presented is rich, plentiful, and must-have information for making the Council work appropriately to accomplish its purpose. The community benefits enormously from the Council's participation. The Provincial Council is looking forward to preparing for every community Council to send their President and Director of Formation, and if they cannot attend, then two other members from the Council.

Fall 2011

Minutes, Plenary Council meeting at Congress

Submitted by Dorothy Mansen, OCDS, of the Provincial Council

The meeting began promptly at 8 p.m. Those in attendance were Father Bonaventure Sauer, Provincial Delegate; members of the Provincial Council; and 48 presidents, formation directors and/or representatives from communities and study groups throughout the Oklahoma Province. After introducing the three new members of the Provincial Council, an overview of the activities of the Provincial Council in the years 2008-2011 and facts pertaining to the state of the Province was delivered. Recognition was given to Elizabeth Korves and Martha Barchard for their past service on the council.

Notice was given to the fact that this was the first year since the founding of the Provincial Council that an actual election was held to replace councilors who had fulfilled their terms. Almost 100 percent of communities and study groups participated in the election. In the previous triennium, 2005-2008, there had not been enough nominations to hold an election. Instead the nominees were appointed by the Provincial to serve on the Council. Of interest, too, this year is the first time that no one from the original Council is serving.

Fifty- plus visitations were completed in the past three years that included: two Groups in Discernment, Tulsa, OK and Omaha-Lincoln, NE who received Study Group status late last year. Congratulations were extended to them. Sadly, three Study Groups were closed as their numbers had dwindled. These were located in Lubbock, TX, Amarillo, TX, and Madison AL. The Provincial Council assigned the members wishing to remain active as Isolates to the Dallas, TX and the Mobile, AL communities.

There are more than 50 Isolates on record in the Province. Present attempts will be made to find out what kind of contact they are experiencing with their communities such as: keeping up with the studies that are taking place in the community, receiving the Flos Carmeli and receiving minutes of the meetings when requested. A few of these Isolates are in formation. Others figures show that there are: 89 aspirants, 98 novices preparing for their First Promise, 106 preparing for Definitive Promise and 453 who have made Definitive Promises.

Two workshops are being planned for 2012. Workshops are held every three years in the year after an election. These are for the presidents and formation directors that were newly elected. New locations are being sought to enable communities who have not attended due to the distances to do so this time. Communities were advised to start setting aside funds for their president and formation director to attend one of these workshops.

Also reported at the meeting was the fact that since the establishment of the Provincial Council, the responsibilities have tripled from what was first anticipated in 2005. It has become an overwhelming task for the five councilors to address these and complete the required visitations. A plan to implement a central office was proposed to all communities recently and comments were encouraged. A draft of a job description was completed along with a financial statement. This proposal was discussed with the friars at their Chapter meeting a couple weeks ago. They understood the need that the Seculars have for a part-

Plenary Council minutes cont.

time administrator.

The establishment of community apostolates that spread Teresian spirituality remains a challenge to most communities. However, there has been an increase in the number of Web sites created by communities/study groups that have outreach capabilities. Another area that needs improvement is that of establishing projected budgets that include expenses for the community for at least the next three years.

The Provincial Council is encouraging more Seculars to develop themselves as speakers to give presentations in their communities and for possible days of recollection in local parishes. Father Bonaventure graciously agreed to review the materials that members would like to present if they send them to him. A listing of the members and their topics would then be made available. The Provincial Council has asked the friars to compile a list of topics they can offer for days of recollection and retreats that can then be made available to communities/study groups.

Also included in the report at the Plenary Council meeting was the need for everyone to study the *RATIO INSTITUTIONIS*. Only a few communities have reported that they have taken time to review its contents. It is a very helpful document especially in the area of formation and discernments.

When the Provincial council spent a day at the Chapter meeting of the friars they asked the question how Seculars could help the friars. Their answer was more than just a request. It was more like a plea. They stated that they are in desperate need of vocations. Many communities pray for diocesan priests and neglect our friars. This year all communities are encouraged to pray for OCD vocations in our Province. The friars asked the Seculars to pass out their brochures wherever and whenever there is an opportunity. They would be most grateful.

The meeting of the Provincial Council last summer at Marylake provided an opportunity for the council to review some of the statues, policies and procedures that are being followed. As time goes on, some of these will be up dated. Father Gregory Ross sat in on a couple meetings and gave his advice on some proposed changes. Also Father Deeney was consulted on a couple of matters.

In closing, gratitude was extended to all the communities and study groups for the kind hospitality given to the councilors during visitations and for all the cooperation in setting up the schedules.

Sharing wisdom from the recent Congress

By Mary Kay Daniels, OCDS, of the Provincial Council

How does one pour an ocean of love into a teacup? Similarly, how can a short summary in a newsletter witness appropriately to Our Lord's magnificent and most bountiful blessings upon our Province and the Church through this year's Congress held in Lafayette, LA, this past June?

Our Congress was entitled "I Was Born For You," and was meticulously organized by our two Lafayette Communities of Mary, Mother of Grace and St. Joseph, Guardian of Carmel. Thank you again to each of you who had to have put mega-hours into organizing such a wonderful event.

Dynamic presenters – among them, Dr. Susan Muto, Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD, Father Bonaventure Sauer, OCD, Father Daniel Chowning, OCD, and Father Gregory Ross, OCD -- delivered contents to nurture every depth and breadth of beingness in the gathering room. Following are a few of the ideas presented, intended to be meaningful catalysts for your reflection and prayer life, among the hundreds of other insights and learnings shared:

- Teresa's entire purpose was to save souls for God.
- Teresa says: "Be like Him." (Jesus) Learn her wisdom!
- Most of our prayer is listening so we know what God wants for us to do.
- We as Seculars are invited to share in mission with the religious.
- Give the friars availability—collaborate with them for the needs of the Province, and pray for our friars daily and for more vocations for the friars.
- Holy Mother Teresa's masterpieces are to be a living, breathing truth for us today as they were for her nuns.
- Do we staying faithful to God's Will (and our calling)? Be true to our particular vocations and honoring our ecclesial responsibility along with our Carmelite vocation.
- Love for the Church is suffering. We suffer so the Church can realize (fulfill) its mission.
- Like St. John the Baptist and St. Elijah, we are to be agents of spiritual vitality; we are to be spiritual lights in our homes.
- We challenge the present culture by giving a better account of who we are and a better appropriation of our Carmelite values.
- Catechize! Support! Heal! Suffer with all! Weave spirituality into daily life.
- "Well and good if all things change Lord God provided I am rooted in you." From St. John of the Cross.
- What holds us back from an unconditional "yes" to the Father? It doesn't matter if a thin thread or a heavy chain holds us down. Sever the bonds that keep us from soaring with God.
- Be humble as Christ who humbled himself to be like us.
- Disengage ourselves from anything excessive.
- It takes great humility to be condemned without fault.
- Humility is the proof of holiness—not any of these visions, locutions, etc.
- The world needs to know God. The world needs the spirituality of Carmel. It is a source of energy to the church we serve.
- Consider the fatigue with which Jesus walks – how much more his sufferings and trials were than ours.

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Sharing wisdom from the Congress cont.

- Teresa would radiate without a word “His Majesty.” Faith is not taught, but caught.
- Teresa offers what she receives in prayer. She offers her experience. Do we offer what we receive in prayer and allow our lives to flow out of our prayer? Teresa reminds her sisters, and all of us, to work hard for what counts.
- The loving presence and hospitality of the Carmelite nuns in Lafayette and their lovely courtyard presented an image of refreshing living beauty and pure harmony with Our Lord.
- Be rooted in the experience of the Living God.
- Teresa valued her humanity and knew the brilliant beauty of the soul.
- Teresa encourages us to cultivate spiritual love. She wants to be true friends with us and for us to grow in her charism.
- Purely spiritual love is what God asks of us. Is it more about God in and through us or is it about us? What are our lives witnessing.
- Just as the life of prayer flows out of life, out of our relationships with others, with created things, and with the self – as St. Teresa elaborates on the first 18 chapters of *The Way of Perfection* – so prayer, authentic prayer, flows back into life, enhancing our well-being, both physical and psychological, and of course remolding us over time into more compassionate and respectful, less aggressive and demanding persons.
- We are trying to re-found ourselves based on Teresa’s life and re-build our identity. (Reminds me of recently reading from Thomas Merton’s Contemplation in a World of Action: “ What is meant by identity? ...For practical purposes here we are talking about one's own authentic and personal beliefs and convictions, based on experience of oneself as a person, experience of one's ability to choose and reject even good things which are not relevant to one's own life.” Linking this definition to being Carmelites in this deeper sense, identity is what we create each moment by our challenging and courageous choices to live the Gospel as a Carmelite family.)
- Live realistically in detachment. —It’s a fresh spiritual way of thinking. There’s nothing better than suffering with joy for the Lord.
- Get and read the book by George Weigel about Bl. John Paul II and do not be afraid to give yourself to Mary as he did. He wants us to know the sweet presence of Mary as a mother and sister in our lives.
- Get and read our present Pope Benedict’s book on Jesus, Book II, and deepen your understanding of Our Lord.
- Holy Mother Teresa wants for us to cultivate the Presence of God, all day long. We look at Christ with interior eyes of faith, love and desires. Christ’s loving Presence enfolds us every moment. Desire becomes the bridge of our contact with Jesus.
- Eucharist is a theological experience of Presence. Close the eyes of your body from the world, open the eyes of your soul through faith and love and love within your own heart.
- Fruitful prayer gives us the ability to forgive other people.
- God is present among us in a love that is very vulnerable – able to be wounded. How much are we willing to suffer for another person? Jesus was vulnerable for us so we can be safe and saved.

Congress attendees visited the nearby cloistered Carmel under the Patronage of Mary, Mother of Grace. The grounds contained zinnias that were planted in such an orderly way, and growing in harmony at a uniform height, that the monastery courtyard was a living artistic masterpiece. The beautiful landscaping and lovely chapel design were only second to the

Sharing wisdom from the Congress cont.

loving and generous hospitality of the nuns who so graciously extended themselves to us.

Among the thoughtful “care items” provided to each attendee (attractive paraphernalia bag, sunflower seeds in keeping with the theme, note cards, etc.) was a most inviting Congress program book, a keepsake which includes the history of Carmel in our country, prayers, prayers from The Liturgy of the Hours, beautiful sacred icons of Holy Mother, blessed holy medals, and welcoming letters from our Provincial Fr. Luis Castaneda, OCD, and Most Reverend Michael Jarrell, Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, LA, the Ratio, and so much more ...and plenty of space for personal notes. I frequently whip open the book, not defected the least by its use by sweaty smudgy hands from exercising and coffee drips dotting the cover which have faded to invisible. It’s a refreshing treat to re-read notes and ponder how I can live all I learned more fully in my life.

At the Congress, we danced together, sang together, prayed from the heart together, learned and shared lives...and thoroughly enjoyed Our Lord’s Presence among us. We are Carmel, after all.

Correction

Father John Michael Payne, OCD, noticed in the Summer 2011 issue of the Flos Carmeli that we had called the recent Regional Congress in Lafayette the 16th Regional Congress. He notes that the 16th Regional Congress was actually in Birmingham in 1992. He added, “Lafayette’s 2011 Congress was actually the 21st Regional Congress of our Province. I suppose it could be listed as the 20th since Houston’s Congress was cancelled in 2008 due to Hurricane Ike, but in my humble historical opinion, Houston’08 should retain its 20th Regional Congress status, because even though officially cancelled, a group from California who had already checked in at the Omni Westside Hotel was unable to flee the Hurricane. Together with Fr. Bonaventure and myself, we weathered the storm and as we were stuck in the hotel until transportation lines out of Houston were resumed, we spent our time conducting a mini-congress at which I delivered my swan song as Provincial Delegate for 27 years: 1978-1990 & 1993-2008. That would make Lafayette’s congress this year the 21st Regional Congress of our province, and our next congress in 2014 the 22nd Regional Congress.”

Assigning Isolates to communities

Dorothy Ashley is the “contact person” on the new Provincial Council for assignment of Isolates to a particular Community or Study Group. It is important that a professed member who lives an hour or more away from his/her Community be able to continue with ongoing formation and community contact through assignment to either a Study Group or established Community. Similarly, those persons who seek to become members of the Secular Order, but who are further than a one-hour drive from an established Community may be accepted into formation if all requirements of initial acceptance by an established Community are met, and, if the person is assigned to an established Community willing to accept them and be responsible for their formation. Once his/her Definitive Promise is made, the Isolate may be assigned to either an established Community or Study Group if the Study Group is closer.

Constitution No. 56 expresses that professed members may become an “Isolate” if they are associated with an established Community:

“Members of the Secular Order, who for reasons of **distance**, (*Note: The reason for being an Isolate is distance only and NOT age, or illness*) cannot participate in the regular meetings of a Community, remain members of the Secular Order and, under the authority of the Provincial Delegate, are to be associated to a particular Community. It is the responsibility of the President of the Community to establish contact with those members and the responsibility of these members to maintain contact with the Community....”

Constitution No. 58 expresses the idea of acceptance and formation of Isolates by established Communities:

“The Provincial Statutes are to determine the following:

the development of an adequate program of formation;
the acceptance and formation of those new members who do not live near an established Community; in every case these new candidates must be identified with and formed by an established Community. They are considered members of that Community. . .”

Lastly, **Section II: Isolates** of the Provincial Statutes state,

“Community is an integral part of the Carmelite Secular vocation [cf. Art. 9d, 26, 36, 40].

1) The Provincial Council shall assign Isolates to a Community. The President of the local Community shall initiate contact with the Isolate [Art. 56]. Ongoing contact may be delegat-

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Assigning Isolates cont.

ed by the President to one or more members of the Community.

2) There shall be monthly contact between the Isolate and the Community member. This contact may be via phone, letter, or e-mail, or in person.

3) In most cases, Isolates in need of formation will be assigned to a Canonical Community, and the Director of Formation shall oversee initial formation of Isolates. Upon making the Definitive Promise, an Isolate then may be transferred to a Study Group which may be geographically closer to the Isolate. 4) During initial formation leading up to Definitive Promises, the Isolate is required to meet with the community at least once a year. All Isolates are strongly encouraged to continue visits to the community at least once a year, preferably during the community's annual retreat.

For further information or assignment of Isolates, please contact,

Dorothy Ashley, OCDS

4830 Raymond Road

Jackson, MS 39212

carmelite57@yahoo.com

601-373-6304 (H); 601-259-0885 (C); 601-372-7258 (FAX)

Father Bonaventure's Congress talk, Part 2

Father Bonaventura Sauer, OCD

I had the privilege of giving one of the presentations at the Regional Congress in Lafayette this past June. Many found the presentation helpful, and a few asked if I might publish it in the Flos Carmeli, thereby making it available for others to read. I've decided to follow their recommendation. Due to its length it needs to be printed in three installments. The following is the second installment. Part 1 was printed in the Summer 2011 Flos Carmeli.. Part 3 will appear in the Winter 2012 Flos.

Chapter 19-26 of *The Way of Perfection* Lafayette Congress

(3) Mental Prayer Joined to Vocal Prayer

St. Teresa opens chapter 22 of *The Way of Perfection* with these words:

Realize, daughters, that the nature of mental prayer isn't determined by whether or not the mouth is closed. If while speaking I thoroughly understand and know that I am speaking with God and I have greater awareness of this than I do of the words I'm saying, mental and vocal prayer are joined. [n.1]

Mental prayer is, therefore, in Teresa's vision, a state or frame of mind, an interior disposition of prayerfulness, if you will. In this particular instance, mental prayer accompanies vocal prayer when vocal prayer is recited with an interior awareness or attention not to the words themselves—although that's not irrelevant—but to the presence of God, to the fact that I am praying. In this way vocal prayer becomes mental prayer because that's all mental prayer is, namely, the engagement of the mind in prayer by remaining mindful or attentive while praying. It's all very simple.

Teresa makes this point because it seems, reading between the lines later in this same chapter 22, there were those who thought mental prayer was dangerous, especially for nuns, and could lead to all kinds of errors or temptations or who knows what. Thus, nuns should be content with saying their prayers, leaving it at that. Teresa, therefore, tries to defuse the whole matter and remove any aura of mystification from the term "mental prayer." She applies it to the simplest of questions regarding our practice and experience of prayer, namely, what's going on with the mind while we're praying with the lips? And when she raises this question, she's not asking primarily whether or not and how well we're paying attention to the words. No, she's asking whether or not we're paying attention to the fact that we're praying, that we're in God's presence speaking to him.

This next passage from a little later in the same chapter 22 develops the matter further:

Who can say that it is wrong, when we begin to recite the Hours or the rosary, to consider whom we are going to speak with, and who we are, so as to know how to speak with Him? Now I tell you, Sisters, if before you begin your vocal prayer you do the great deal that must be done in order to understand these two points well, you will be spending a good amount of time in mental prayer. [n.3]

Again, you can see that Teresa is defending the practice of mental prayer by demystifying it. She

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Father Bonaventure's talk cont.

also does another thing—she expands the moment of making mental prayer beyond the awareness that accompanies vocal prayer itself. Here mental prayer acts as a kind of preparation for vocal prayer. We take a moment to first still our minds and place ourselves, our sense of personal awareness, in God's presence.

Thus, perhaps we can extract from these clues and suggestions something like a simple method of prayer. It's not exactly meditation, in the full-fledged sense of that practice. It's just a method of trying to pray mindfully or attentively. Remember, though, that this mindfulness has more to do with our staying aware of the fact that we are praying, that we are in the present moment *with God*—it has more to do with that than with our being closely attentive to what we are saying, to the words themselves of the prayer we're using.

So, let me lay out this method in three simple steps:

(1) Take a moment or two to try to relax outwardly and to still oneself inwardly. Don't spend a lot of time at this, though, otherwise the mind might start to wander.

(2) Remind yourself that you're about to pray and think for a moment of this God whose presence you are about to come into, so to speak, using your imagination to sort of feel God's presence near you or within you.

(3) And then, trying to keep hold of this moment of being with God, recite some sort of prayer, once, maybe twice. Keep it simple. The *Our Father* would be good. Or some other prayer, traditional or not. Or a simple, short psalm. Or maybe the *Magnificat*. Or a prayer composed by Teresa or John, culled from their writings.

A couple points of clarification. First, in step (2)—invoking God's presence—the point isn't to engage in theological reflection about God. Nor should I let my feelings about myself get in the way. Rather, I come into God's presence as he has revealed himself to us in Christ—namely, as a God who loves us, who desires our good, and who in fact desires our love in return. Thus, there is no need for fear. We come before God as one who is loved, not condemned.

And the second point of clarification. In step (3)—reciting a prayer—you have to be careful to keep from getting caught up in a search for novelty. The prayer should be familiar and, while evocative or expressive, easy to understand. Indeed, the point is that we not get caught up pondering the words since we're using our minds to try to preserve an inner sense of personal awareness of God—that we're in God's presence, speaking to him. The focus should be on God, with as much self-forgetfulness as we can muster, and not on ourselves or on what we're saying. It is an effort on our part to sustain a state of mindfulness, only attentive to the presence of God in the here-and-now as we offer him a few simple words of prayer.

So, that would be it—one, grow quiet; two, be with God; three, offer him a simple prayer. It's no big deal, although it's harder than one might think, revealing from the start how distracted we usually are. In the understanding of St. Teresa, it would be a simple way of joining vocal prayer with mental prayer, or mental prayer with vocal prayer.

The whole thing would probably take, oh, five minutes at most, not even that. Thus, having completed the exercise you could sit quietly for a spell or do a little spiritual reading. Then, after a stretch, try it again. If one pursued such a practice steadfastly for 20-30 minutes a day, I suspect that rather quickly one would be able to sit quietly, attentively, in God's presence for longer periods of time, practicing a kind of sustained recollection. You'd still recite this or that prayer from time to time, but before and after and through it all there'd be this sense of deep interior recollection in God's presence. Personally I can think of no better way to prepare ourselves, by our own efforts, for the grace of the contemplative experience of God in prayer.

Let me close this section, although not this talk—no, not yet—with a brief exhortation by Holy Mother. It too is from chapter 22 of *The Way of Perfection*:

Father Bonaventure's talk cont.

You should not be thinking of other things while speaking with God, for doing so amounts to not knowing what mental prayer is. I believe the matter has been explained. May it please the Lord that we know how to put it into practice. Amen. [n.8]

(4) Further Reflections on this Topic

Now I'll skip ahead a couple of chapters, to chapter 24 of *The Way of Perfection*. There St. Teresa elaborates further on this topic of mental prayer joined with vocal prayer and offers some new insights and suggestions. Her audience remains the same. She addresses those who want to practice mental prayer but find that they have great trouble using the more developed methods of meditation common at the time. As she says at the opening of chapter 24:

Now, then, let us speak again to those souls I mentioned that cannot recollect or tie their minds down in mental prayer or engage in reflection . . . [n.1]

Thus, she focuses her teaching, as she has been since chapter 19, on how to practice vocal prayer in a way that sort of turns it into mental prayer, if you will—or, as I've presented it, in a way that practices vocal prayer with mindfulness. We can utilize vocal prayer in all its simplicity—rather than trying to take up the more developed practices of meditation—but in doing so we can strive to overcome our distractedness and so learn to discipline our minds. In n.2 of chapter 24, then, she writes—and it's another lengthy passage:

Well what I now want to counsel you about . . . is how you must pray vocally, for it's only right that you should understand what you're saying . . . I will speak of those prayers we are obliged as Christians to recite (such as, the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*) so that people won't be able to say of us that we speak and don't understand what we're speaking about—unless we think it is enough for us to follow the practice in which merely pronouncing the words is sufficient. I'm not concerned with whether this is sufficient or not . . . What I would like us to do, daughters, is refuse to be satisfied with merely pronouncing the words . . . And when I say, "Our Father," it will be an act of love to understand who this Father of ours is and who the Master is who taught us this prayer. [n.2]

You'll notice a few things here. Teresa's sisters in Carmel—to whom she is writing, of course—have a certain obligation to say their prayers. Teresa mentions the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*. This obligation they have as Christians, as she says. Vocal prayer is an obligation of Christian piety. It is only right, therefore, that as Carmelite nuns—as persons consecrated to a life of prayer, in other words—they should understand what they are saying and what they are doing as they pray. Even more, it is for Teresa a point of pride. She doesn't want others thinking her sisters just babble their prayers mindlessly, even if that might be sufficient in a legalistic, minimalistic way. But more importantly she wants—and she sets it down as a basic characteristic of the Teresian Carmel—that her sisters not only *understand*

Father Bonaventure's talk cont.

their prayers, but that they *mean* them, offering the *Our Father*, for example, as an act of love to God the Father in obedience to the teaching of Christ the Son. She wants their prayers to be heartfelt and relational, the act of an *I* speaking to a *You*.

Teresa further develops this relational aspect, which is meant to enliven vocal prayer and make it more authentic, by recalling the counsel to go into our room, close the door, and pray in solitude, as it is found in the Sermon on the Mount. In n.4 of this chapter 24 she writes:

Now with regard to vocal prayer you already know that His Majesty teaches that it be recited in solitude . . . one cannot speak simultaneously to God and to the world; this would amount to nothing more than reciting the prayer while listening to what is being said elsewhere or to letting the mind wander and making no effort to control it. [ch.24, n.4]

In other words, even in making vocal prayer, we are to have this sense, this awareness, of being alone with God. But God and I are alone together not merely physically, of course, but above all relationally, interpersonally, so to speak. I have my attention focused on God, trying not to let my mind wander here and there and alight on this or that ultimately unimportant preoccupation.

The point is simple. We should strive for an inner, attentive solitude of heart, closing the door to all our passing worries and concerns and making this interior room, if you will, the place where we go to meet God and offer him our prayers. Teresa recognizes, of course, that it will not always be possible to do this—to withdraw and be alone with God. Distractions will come. Inner turmoil will rage. Thus, we may need from time to time to make exceptions to our regular practice of prayer. In this same chapter 24 she lists some reasons for making such an exception. She writes:

There can be exceptions at times either because of bad humors—especially if the person is melancholic—or because of faint feelings in the head so that all efforts become useless. Or it can happen that God will permit days of severe temptation in his servants for their greater good. And though in their affliction they are striving to be quiet, they cannot even be attentive to what they are saying, no matter how hard they try; nor will the intellect settle down in anything, but by the disordered way it goes about, it will seem to be in a frenzy. [n.4]

In other words, ill health can hinder our ability to pray, just as psychological or emotional turmoil can throw up an obstacle as well. None of this is our fault. And Teresa counsels against becoming anxious, worried, or overly concerned about such things when they happen. As she says:

Whoever experiences the affliction these distractions cause will see that they are not his fault; he should not grow anxious, which makes things worse, or tire himself trying to put order into something that at the time doesn't have any, that is, his mind. He should just pray as best he can; or even not pray, but like a sick person strive to bring some relief to his soul; let him occupy himself in other works of virtue . . . [ch.24, n.5]

Father Bonaventure's talk cont.

Teresa seems to assume that this condition of unmanageable inner distraction will prove transient and pass. It is not a normal state. If it were, well, that would be another matter entirely. But it is not. Anxiety about it, therefore, tends only to make the condition worse, and lots of struggle or effort to try to still oneself will, on such occasions, most likely prove pointless. Teresa says that in such cases or at such times the person should pray as best he or she can—which is obvious advice. But she even goes a step further and says that the person might just as well leave off trying to pray. Instead, he or she should probably do something else, some other good work—spiritual reading perhaps, or study, or writing. I don't know what exactly Teresa had in mind here.

But insofar as we can, we are to strive for this inner solitude from which then to recite our prayers while paying close attention to God and letting God's grace, at a place in us deeper than awareness, flow in and pervade us. Teresa writes:

What we ourselves can do is to strive to be alone; and please God it will suffice, as I say, that we understand to whom we are speaking and the answer the Lord makes to our petitions. Do you think He is silent? Even though we do not hear Him, He speaks well to the heart when we beseech Him from the heart. [ch.24, n.5]

The Lord is answering our prayers even as we speak. A true conversation is going on, although we can't hear it. We speak our prayer to the Lord, which is really a way of being alone with him and opening ourselves to him. He, then, in turn, speaks to our hearts.

And so at the end of this chapter 24, Teresa sums up her teaching. Yes, vocal prayer becomes mental prayer because the two, when all is said and done, can't really be separated. She says in n.6:

You are right in saying that this vocal prayer is now in fact mental prayer. But I tell you that surely I don't know how mental prayer can be separated from vocal prayer if the vocal prayer is to be recited well with an understanding of whom we are speaking to. It is even an obligation that we strive to pray with attention. Please God that with these remedies we shall recite the *Our Father* well and not end up in some other irrelevant thing. I have experienced this sometimes, and the best remedy I find is to strive to center the mind upon the one to whom the words are addressed. [n.6]

In all this she is speaking from her own experience. She has experienced for herself, just as we have, this sort of disconnected, meaningless mouthing of prayers as the mind wanders off and detaches itself from the fact that we are praying. And the best remedy she knows of to counter this distraction is not to struggle over the words but to try to center the mind on God, on the one *to whom* we are talking.

You are cordially invited to attend the
2012 OCDS Congress
August 16-19
Wakefield, Massachusetts
focusing on Our Lady's presence and influence in our Order



Our Lady's Commandment:
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or contact Loretta L. Gallagher, OCDS at (978) 462-1057

REGISTRATION FORM FOR 2012 OCDS CONGRESS

NOTE: A separate Registration Form must be submitted for each person attending the Congress.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. Br. Sr. Rev.

Last Name _____ First _____

Mailing Address:

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Contact Phone Number: _____ Other Phone Number: _____

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Affiliation: OCDS OCD Other _____ Province: _____

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Arrival date at Congress: _____ Transportation: Driving Flying

At the time of this printing, the Logan Express Shuttle is available from the airport to the Peabody terminal for \$12.00 one-way or \$22.00 round trip. For more information and the complete schedule, visit www.massport.com. Once at the Peabody terminal, call the Sheraton Hotel (781-245-9300) for complimentary shuttle transportation to the hotel.

Do you plan to commute daily to the Congress? Yes No

Do you plan to stay at the Sheraton Colonial Hotel? Yes No (First priority for confirmed registration)

If yes, *you are responsible for making your own hotel reservation.* Please contact the Sheraton Reservations Desk at (888) 627-7205 and ask for the OCDS Congress **discounted group rate of \$109.00** per room per night (based on availability). This rate will be guaranteed until July 16, 2012 and includes the nights of August 14 -19. **Due to space limitations, the Congress has a firm limit of 300 participants**, so it is best to submit Registration Forms and make hotel reservations as soon as possible in order not to be disappointed. You must have a **confirmed registration** in order to attend the Congress. Because the Congress must meet its contracted room and board quota, priority for confirmed registrations will go to those staying at the hotel. Confirmations will be sent via e-mail, phone or postal mail on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the hotel quota is reached, commuter applications will be processed and confirmed in the order in which they were received, depending on space available

Are you interested in a trip to Boston Harbor/Faneuil Hall on Friday night? (Extra cost involved, approximately \$35)
 Yes No

Please complete this Registration Form and mail it to the address listed below with your **non-refundable (but transferrable*) Congress Registration Deposit of \$150.00. Forms without this deposit will not be processed.** *For details, please contact Congress Chairperson

SAVE \$50! Total registration fee received before May 15, 2012: **\$300.00 (Balance due: \$150.00)**

Total registration fee received after May 15, 2012: **\$350.00 (Balance due: \$200.00)**

All balances are due by July 16, 2012 (Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel)

Make check or money order payable to: "2012 OCDS Congress." Mail this completed form with payment to:

Jane Tarr 19 Greens Point Rd. Ipswich, MA 01938

Questions? Contact Loretta Gallagher, OCDS Congress Chairperson at lorluceri@yahoo.com or call (978) 462-1057

Visit the Congress website for more information, registration forms and updates: www.2012ocdscongress.org

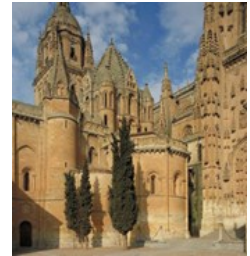
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SEPTEMBER 12 – 20, 2012

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DEPART BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT

PROMOTER: THAIS FORREST, OCDS



DAY 1 USA / MADRID

Depart Birmingham airport for your overnight flight to Spain.

DAY 2 AVILA

Arrive early morning in Madrid where you will be met by your tour guide and transferred to Avila, the City of Kings and of Saints, completely encircled by 11th century walls. This is the birthplace of St. Theresa one of the greatest mystics of the Church. Celebrate Mass at the Convent of St. Theresa. (D)

DAY 3: AVILA

The walled city of Avila is most famous for being the home of St. Teresa, one of the only female doctors of the Church. Avila's atmosphere has changed very little since the days of St. Theresa, to whom the city is dedicated. St. Theresa, the great mystic, was the first woman to be named a Doctor of the Church. In the morning we will visit the city of Avila: the Cathedral, which contains many of St. Theresa relics; The crypt of the Convento of La Santa, built on the site of the house where she was born, is home to the most comprehensive museum dedicated to her life, and La Encarnacion Convent, the first convent she found. Dinner and overnight in Avila. (B,D)

DAY 4: AVILA / ALBA DE TORMES / SALAMANCA

After breakfast in the hotel, we will depart towards the city of Alba de Tormes. The town boasts of possessing the mortal remains of St Theresa of Avila in the church of the Carmelite Convent where her miraculously pierced heart rests in a glass reliquary. Continue to Salamanca. The group will enjoy an orientation tour of Salamanca, a famous university city, including a visit to the University, which was founded in 1223 by Alfonso XI of Leon. Also visit the Plaza Mayor and the famous Cathedral. Dinner and overnight in Salamanca. (B,D)

DAY 5 SALAMANCA / MEDINA DEL CAMPO / FONTIVEROS / SALAMANCA

Depart Salamanca for Medina del Campo. Visit the Carmelite Monastery. Continue our journey to Fontiveros, birthplace of Saint John of the Cross, where we will visit the Carmelite Convent and the Church of San Cipriano where St. John of the Cross was baptized. Return to Salamanca for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 6 SALAMANCA / SEGOVIA / MADRID

Early morning departure from Salamanca for Madrid. En route, stop in Segovia. Arrival to the city and sight-seeing tour with a local guide: Alcazar, Roman Aqueduct, Gothic Cathedral, San Miguel Church where the Catholic Queen Isabel was crown, the Carmel Monastery where St. John of the Cross is buried and the Corpus Christi Church, one of the most important synagogues in Spain converted into a Church in the XIV Century. Dinner and overnight in Madrid. (B,D)

DAY 7 MADRID / TOLEDO / MADRID

Depart Madrid in the morning for Toledo, one of Spain's most ancient and charming cities. Here you will visit the El Greco Museum, tour Old Town have lunch (on your own) together at a Parador perched above the city. Enjoy the afternoon wandering the quaint streets. There will be ample time to shop for Toledo's famous gold jewelry and cutlery. Return to Madrid for dinner at the hotel and overnight. (B,D)

DAY 8: MADRID

Today we have a half-day orientation tour of the beautiful capital of Spain. From your motorcoach you will see the Prado, the Royal Palace, and other important sites. Transfer to your hotel for the balance of the day at leisure. Dinner and overnight in Madrid. (B,D)

DAY 9 MADRID / USA

Depart for Madrid Airport with same day arrival at New York area airport. (B)

Included Highlights:

- * **Airfare:** Roundtrip from Birmingham Airport.
- * **Accommodations:** 7 nights Superior Tourist Class Hotels (3 star hotels).
- * **Meals:** 7 Breakfasts & 7 Dinners
- * **Sightseeing:** As listed in the itinerary.

Also Included: Daily Mass, Airport-hotel transfers, hotel tips & taxes, baggage handling, Touring by Private Air Conditioned Motorcoach, Services of Professional Pilgrimage Escort.

*Price is based on a minimum of 20 passengers. Deposits encouraged by April 2011 (\$300.00)

Reservations deadline by June 08, 2012 to secure seats

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL MS.
THAIS FORREST AT 1-205-424-9626

Or email: Thais.Forrest@gmail.com

News from around the province

Compiled by Father Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

1. Georgetown, TX—submitted by Lydia Pena, OCDS

Our study group completed a wonderful project in order to finish our year studying *The Way of Perfection*. Each member was asked to turn in a phrase from the book, the one that struck him or her the most. Then the phrase, along with the person's photo, was mounted on a large bulletin board. At our September meeting Marion Burke, our formation director, then invited each of us to give the reason for our choice of phrase. Everyone participated with great interest. The picture, at right, shows Marion standing before the bulletin board, with photos and



phrases.

On May 14 2011, Lydia Pena (Lydia of Jesus), of the Triumph of the Cross Study Group, made her First Promise in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. The profession was celebrated during the 8:30 AM Mass at St. Helen's Catholic Church in Georgetown, TX. Msgr. Louis Pavlicek, pastor at St. Helen's, presided. A reception followed. In the photo at left Lydia, newly professed, stands in the sanctuary of the church beside a statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

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. Houston, TX—San Juan de la Cruz Community

Six members of our community attended the Regional Congress in Lafayette, LA. We came dressed in tee-shirts proudly proclaiming our community allegiance. At the top of the next page is a photo taken at the Congress showing the six of us—namely, from left to right, Kay Calzone, Mary Cano, Lolita Martinez, Tereza Jalamo, Anita Mendoza, and Maria Galindo. The odd one of excessive stature in the middle is Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD.



3. Little Rock, AR—submitted by Patricia Cromwell, OCDS

On Sunday, May 1, members of the Little Rock OCDS community, along with the two novices of the friars at Marylake—Brs. Jorge and Bradley—manned a vocations booth at Christ the King Parish in Little Rock. It was another wonderful opportunity to share the joy and blessing of our Carmelite vocation. Shown in the photo to the left are Jeannine Huard Hart, our new President [on the left], with Mary Howard, our secretary and a councilor, seated beside her.



On Saturday, May 14, we were blessed to have three new members clothed in a joyous ceremony at Marylake. Fr. Raphael Kitz, OCD, presided. A potluck luncheon followed, with our members, the friars at Marylake, and friends of the newly clothed attending. In the photo at the top of the next page are, from left to right, Nancy Lowry, our Aspirancy Director, and Ellen Bucolo, Sharon Balmaz, and Valerie Franks, our new novices. Fr. Raphael, our longtime Spiritual Assistant, stands to the right.

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4. Topeka, KS—submitted by Paula Wierman, OCDS

On July 10, at Christ the King Parish in Topeka, our community celebrated the First Promise of Toni Halverson and Sharon Marcos and the Definitive Promise of Paula Wierman. The community's Spiritual Assistant, Deacon Chris Seago, presided at the ceremony. All were blessed by his beautiful words of encouragement following the Scripture readings. Marian Ganser, one of our members, hand decorated programs for the ceremony. They not only served their intended purpose during the ceremony but now, following, have become treasured keepsakes of the happy occasion. After the ceremony, cake and punch were shared by the community as well as the family and friends of the newly professed who had joined us. In the photo to the right, pictured from left to right, are Toni Halvorsen and Sharon Morcos, who made First Promise, and Paula Wierman, who made Final Promise.



Parting Words

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Province, which has jurisdiction over O.C.D.S. members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. For subscription information contact Martha Hanley, editor, at tnmhanley@yahoo.com.

“How does one acquire this love? By being determined to work and to suffer, and to do so when the occasion arises. It is indeed true that by thinking of what we owe the Lord, of who He is, and what we are, a soul’s determination grows, and that this thinking is very meritorious and appropriate for beginners. But it must be understood that this is true provided that nothing interferes with obedience or benefit to one’s neighbor.”

From *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila , Volume Three* translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez Copyright (c) 1985 by Washington Province of Discalced Carmelites ICS Publications 2131 Lincoln Road, N.E. Washington , DC 20002-1199 U.S.A.

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MADRID — Pope Benedict XVI announced Aug. 20, 2011, that he will declare St. John of Avila the 34th doctor of the church. Source: Catholic News Service.

Question: What do you know about St. John of Avila, and how is he of interest to Carmelites?

The answer will be revealed in the Winter Flos.