

Flos Carmeli

From the president: Thank you, Houston! And highlights of Houston Councilors' Workshop

By Mary Kay Daniels, OCDS, of the Provincial Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

Warmest Greetings in Our Risen Lord!

May this vibrant Easter Season continue to bless you and your loved ones with great joy, spiritual love and the peace beyond understanding, as we celebrate Our Risen Jesus with renewed hearts and well-being! Alleluia!

It is with deep gratitude to each person who attended and participated in the Councilors' Workshop that I particularly wish to acknowledge, because all of us together made it a fully engaging, useful and soulful moment that will provide useful guidance for your Council work and happy, healthy communities going forward. Workshop evaluations were so positive, including "The preparation, expertise and love shown by

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PC members was not only a wonderful resource, but worked to create an extremely effective workshop.” I couldn’t be more grateful and blessed to be working with such a dedicated group of colleagues on the PC, as each of us puts full heart, soul into everything we do!

Kathy Dewine and Claire Bloodgood reviewed the input supplied by everyone to Father Debastiani’s questionnaire and shared the summary we sent to him. This data is included in this issue for your review. Please keep mindful that we had to edit your excellent responses based on the practicality of serving his intention to collect information helpful on the global perspective. Most of the data we collected we will be using for upcoming work with updating formation guidelines and statutes. Thank you for the rich input!

Chris Wood presented on the “Ratio in Formation” reminding us that the primary responsibility of the local council according to the OCDS Constitutions is the formation of the entire community, and that governance comes as a secondary and supportive role to this primary purpose. If the formation is adequate, then governance becomes minimal. Also, the purpose of formation is “to prepare the person” to live the spirituality of Carmel and not to produce experts in Carmelite spirituality. Reviewing the components of human, Christian and Carmelite formation, Chris also stated that maturation in living the Teresian charism is the most genuine sign of a vocation.

I presented on the recent addition to the OCDS Constitutions on Community Life (Fraternal Communion), inviting everyone to reflect on the reality of Trinitarian love, asking how we image and live Trinitarian love both individually and as Carmelite Secular Community. To warm up our spiritual and intellectual muscles, I presented slides from a recent visit to New York City that invited reflection on the presence of and activities of the Holy Trinity. Among them was one of a Trinitarian-shaped pistil of the Stargazer lily known for its fragrant perfume (analogous to spiritual love). The life creating process that continues on by the germination caused by wind-borne pollen, stigma and stamen, all firmly and gently embraced by the lovely pink and white lily petals provides a thought-provoking symbol for the beautiful and holy process of being self-containing, life-giving, self-gifting or self-donating and simultaneously being purely receptive, imaging the relating of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. This was just one of several concrete images to help us get in touch with the life giving reality of our beloved Holy Trinity. The purpose of the reflection was to invite all of us to live in relationship with the Holy Trinity more fully, both individually and in community, which is freshly articulated in the new addition on community to our Constitutions.

For Teresa, community was where all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, and all must be helped. I emphasized the presence of joy in our communities, as Jesus came so that our joy might be complete, also remembering Holy Mother Teresa’s counsel that God didn’t want her nuns running around with long-faces (my paraphrasing). Regarding community, Father Bonaventure had emphasized in a homily earlier in the day about the importance of loving God with whole heart, mind and soul and neighbors as self, being there for others; and the importance of understanding more profoundly that cultivating the fullness of chastity as the virtue foundational to thriving community.

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Kathy Dewine and Claire Bloodgood discussed how discernments are an ongoing process, not just for the end of a formation period. Prescreening is important; to be sure there are no impediments and to be clear about what the visitor can expect. They went on to talk about what to look for in the early months and throughout aspirancy. This included whether the person is enjoying the meetings and keeping up with the studies, how well they get along with others, whether they pitch in and help, and attendance.

Next they discussed helping candidates for the promise, both first and definitive, focusing especially on how the entire council stays involved throughout the year. It is important that all council members are familiar with the formation goals and that all get to know the candidates. After that they went into detail on positive signs, common concerns, and interventions. They encouraged councils to address issues early on, rather than wait until the end of the formation period.

Lastly, they covered the discernment for promise – the promise letter, the consultation with the formator, pre-interview discussions, how to conduct an interview, to how to make the decision itself. Red flags, extensions, and when to say ‘no’ generated a lot of interest among attendees. The Q&A was lively and informative.

Jo Ann Murphy gave the final presentation on “An Effective Local Council.” Among the many pointers she provided, she encouraged councils to be open and transparent in communications, and keeping confidentiality always a priority. Council decisions are to be communicated to the entire Community. She stated that an effective local Council realizes that the greatest impact on the formation of community members is the manner in which Council members themselves reflect Carmelite spirituality and unconditional love toward each member of the Community. She also reviewed ways for a Council to develop a discernment strategy and the importance of focusing on the future well-being of the community.

The most frequently repeated recommendation for the PC by attendees was a request to present the Workshop sooner after a new Council is elected. This wisdom will be heeded going forward.

Again, thank you to all Workshop participants for creating such a rich and informative learning moment for all of us, and to all of our local Council members for your great dedication and hard work, and to each one of our community members who all together, make of us one authentic and loving Carmelite Secular family. May God bless you richly each and every one!

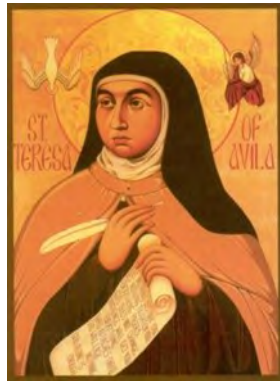
With heartfelt gratitude,

Mary Kay Daniels, President

On Behalf of the Provincial Council Members Chris Woods, Claire Bloodgood, Kathy Dewine, and Jo Ann Murphy



Saint Teresa ~ 5th Centenary



OCDS Provincial Council Celebration - 5th Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa of Jesus
Reflections by Chris Wood, OCDS



Our celebration in Houston on March 13-15, 2015 was a great success as can be attested by all those in attendance. There were 188 people who attended the conference which included Seculars from around the province, our Provincial and five of our friars, and several guests. The Omni Hotel turned out to be a great setting for the conference with its lovely atrium area, spacious meeting

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rooms, good food and comfortable guest rooms.

The Votive Mass for St. Teresa on Saturday was quite beautiful and will be remembered for many years to come. It was truly a blessing for all. It is estimated that more than 600 people attended the Mass including various members from the vast Carmelite family, parishioners, and others from the Archdiocese. It was a particular joy to have our friars of the province, and nuns from New Caney in attendance.



The Provincial Council would like to recognize Margarita Dufilho, and Janice Miller for their dedication and hard work over many months preparing for this celebration.

Also, our special thanks goes out to the Most Reverend George Sheltz, Reverend Mario Arroyo, Deacon Ray Odom, and David Wood from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for their enthusiastic participation and assistance.

We are most grateful to our friars for attending and participating throughout the weekend including our provincial, Fr. Luis Castaneda, our provincial delegate Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, and Fr. Jerome Earley, Fr. John Michael Payne, Fr. Ralph Reyes, and Fr. John Magdalene Suenram.

Our deepest gratitude is extended to all the members of the greater Houston OCDS communities, the staff at St. Cyril's, members of the Houston OCARM communities, and the many volunteers who gave of their time and talents including; Angelita Acosta, Alice Adler, Judy Alexius, Betsy Anderson, Mary Ann Bleacher, Cruz Coronodo, K.C and Marty Curtis, Mary Ann Delpeche, Mary Theresa DeMary, Alicia Driscoll, Terry Espinosa, Joseph Fougere, Selin Fuller, Maria and Sal Galindo, Gretchen Grace, Yvette Heno, Teresa Hernandez, Doria Hines, Michael Hines, Richard Hoyle, Mary Lou Lim, Anita and Ernest Mendoza, Dina Montufar, Roger Morris, Margaret Nunez, Teresa Oh, Violeta Panis, Joe Patrick, Jesse Romero, Henrietta Rottman, Roger Sahni, Laly Sarabia, Diana Sepulveda, Karen Sumner, Robert Tadlock, Teresa Theccanat, Jeannice Theriot, Mara Therese Thomas, Gordon Travis, Ray Viernes, and Margaret Yong.

We also wish to recognized and express our gratitude to the following financial contributors;

Lydia Allen, Judy Alexis, Anu Bhattacharya, Mary Pat Delozier, Alicia Driscoll, Gerrie Hvizdas, Maria Martinez, Paul Martinez, Margaret Nunez, Diana Sepulveda, Suzanne Treis, and Margaret Yong.

The PC would like to especially thank our conference speakers and homilist for giving of their time, knowledge, and intimate reflections of St. Teresa and her writings; Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, Dan Burke, Fr. John Magdalene Suenram, Dr. Anthony Lilles, Fr. Jerome Earley, and Fr. John Michael Payne. Your contributions helped to make this special occasion most memorable!

We give all praise and glory to God, and thanksgiving to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Joseph and all the Carmelite saints who have interceded in our behalf that we might give honor to our Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus!

Sincerely in Christ,

Chris Wood

Chairperson, Houston Celebration

Report of the OCDS Provincial Delegate

by Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

It is Monday of Holy Week as I begin this report. By the time you receive it and read it, assuming that you read it—I take nothing for granted—by then we will be well into the Easter Season. And I pray that your keeping of these coming (as I write) high holy days of our liturgical year, the Easter Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, the Easter Vigil, leading us into Easter Sunday—I pray it has been an emotionally and spiritually rich, moving, hope-filled, and heart-felt experience for you, one of joyful renewal in our faith.

This year, like every year, we renew our baptismal promises at Easter. This year, like every year, you likewise during the Easter Season renew our promises as Carmelites. What perhaps makes this year a bit different is that we make this renewal within the added and very special context of the Centenary Year. As a spiritual family we have striven to keep this year as a kind of re-immersion into the vocational waters of our Holy Mother's life and teaching. Our prayer throughout has been that, 500 years after her birth, we her sons and daughters might thus be reborn into an ever more vital faithfulness to our God-given identity and purpose, our calling as Carmelites.

Indeed, may the renewal of our baptismal and our Carmelite promises take on, therefore, an added weight and significance during this Centenary Year. As at Easter each year we are called as a Church to wake up anew to our vocation as Christians, as followers of Jesus, so may the grace of this special occasion for us as sons and daughters of St. Teresa stir us up to a new wakefulness as Carmelites.

Yet even Homer nods

Today's Gospel, on this Monday of Holy Week, speaks of how Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, while at a dinner they had prepared for Jesus in their home, "took a liter of costly perfumed oil . . . and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair."

Now, it so happened that, many years ago, while presiding at mass on this Monday of Holy Week in the chapel of a Carmel of our province, I was reading the gospel and, coming to the verse above, being lost in the mental fog of the early hour I instead read that Mary "took a liter of costly perfumed oil . . . and anointed the hair of Jesus and dried it with her feet."

Luckily, thanks to my mental fog the gaffe, worthy as it was of a good blush, didn't

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register. I forged ahead with the gospel and homily and the rest of the mass as if nothing had happened. Only later, in the sacristy, did one of the sisters, with a smile, tell me about it. What wonders I'd prophesied that year as High Priest unknowingly!

A nod to the planners, speakers, and all who attended the celebration in Houston

For those of you who were able to attend the OCDS provincial centenary celebration in Houston this past March, including the workshop for councilors that preceded it, please feel free, as you report back on the event to your communities, to rave as much as the Spirit moves you to, which is unboundedly, I'm sure. In fact, hyperbole is welcome. So, indulge yourselves.

Indeed, I would say that the event was simply exceptional. And while I've happily taken a share of the credit, the real praise goes elsewhere. There's the OCDS Provincial Council who worked very hard and in a truly collaborative way, which I found quite inspiring. We friars could learn a thing or two from you.

Then there are the four Houston communities who gave of themselves energetically. In fact, we can only guess at all the work involved. But that fact doesn't keep us from being deeply appreciative. Thanks to all.

As for the friars, I think I can rightly feel proud of our contribution. Wouldn't you agree? Between the conferences and presentations and homilies and masses, I'd say we comported ourselves well. I hope Holy Mother smiled on her sons when she saw how, at least in such a venue, and before a sympathetic audience, we demonstrated our love and knowledge—our loving knowledge—for her teaching and person.

I also have to repeat here, on behalf of the friars, the deep gratitude we have for all that you are doing in your communities to honor our Holy Mother during this Centenary Year. We are a small province, yes. But we make up for it with a supersized dose of dedication, creativity, and all round good spirit.

In fact, the Provincial has been so impressed by you and by all that you are doing during this Centenary Year that he has asked to have a meeting between your Provincial Council and ours, the Seculars and the Friars. The meeting will be sometime during the fall or, possibly, winter. Together we'll review the Centenary Year, and then talk about the needs of the province and how we might best assist each other in responding to them. Lastly, we'll no doubt try to look to the immediate future and make plans for how we might carry the grace of this special year forward. We don't want it simply to have come and gone, do we?

Oh, we friars may limp along, and vocations prove few and far between. Our future may seem sort of "up in the air," dangling uncertainly before us. But, in it all, today is still today, and all of us together—nuns, friars, and seculars—have what we need to live out our Carmelite

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vocation as best we can, proving as faithful as we can to our charism and spirituality. What then is stopping us from living as persons of joy, of gentleness and compassion, carrying within us an attentive peace of heart?

Which brings me to my next topic . . .

A nod from our Fr. General

In this issue of the *Flos Carmeli* you will find a special letter from our Holy Father Pope Francis to our Fr. General Saverio Cannistra on the occasion of St. Teresa's birthday—that is, of her actual 500th birthday, March 28, 2015. It is a letter that rejoices in the charism we have received—we, the Discalced Carmelite Order and, through us, the whole Church—from "this exceptional woman," St. Teresa of Jesus. It highlights the three avenues along which this charism expresses itself: the practice of interior prayer within the broad horizon of the church's mission, rooted in the commitments of community. A simple letter, it is nonetheless spiritually rich and, of course, worth our study and reflection.

Attached to the Holy Father's letter is a prayer written by our Fr. General. The prayer is addressed to Holy Mother herself, on the occasion of her birthday, and is thoroughly heartfelt, if you ask me. The General is speaking for us all. Please make this prayer your own.

Here are four excerpts from it that seem to me especially meaningful.

(1) Fr. General offers his birthday greeting to Holy Mother on behalf of us who, through her, have discovered "how our life is changed by learning to be with [Jesus] in simplicity and love, limiting ourselves to gazing on him who gazes at us."

That last phrase—"limiting ourselves to gazing on him who gazes at us"—comprises, it seems to me, a wonderful statement of our practice of prayer, one both concise and luminous. I resonate especially the General's use of the word *limit*. To pray by limiting oneself to a simple act of inner communion with the Lord, to be thus gently drawn into the gaze of the heart—such an interiority requires of us a steadfast, humble, contemplative purpose in our spiritual lives. We must detach our egos from all extraneous agendas and demands and conditions and acknowledge that the Spirit has indeed been given fully in Jesus our crucified and risen Lord. Then we simply are in the moment of prayer, present here and now in his presence, keeping Sabbath in God's grace.

(2) "Thank you [Teresa]," the General continues, "for . . . freeing us from the tortuous paths that always circle around ourselves and close us off from others."

Of course, these tortuous paths are, I'd say, to be found especially in the twists and turns our egotism makes of religion, of the spiritual life, of the life of prayer. It is what turns religion into self-glorification, the spiritual life into exercises of self-righteousness, the life of prayer into acts of self-alienation and self-deification. To be always alert to these dangers, to presume noth-

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ing of ourselves, and yet to trust in God and relax and let go and be persons who delight in being human—the need to maintain this delicate balance seems to me an important motif throughout Holy Mother's teaching.

(3) "You [Teresa] never lost hope and have taught us not to lose it, because God does not leave at a halfway point those who are determined to reach the goal, the fount of living water."

I don't think I'm alone in saying that I very much need to hear this reassurance repeatedly, day after day. And, indeed, Holy Mother is constant in giving it. In fact, she offers it boldly again and again—something that is another distinctive mark of her spirit. It should be a mark or characteristic equally present among us.

(4) "Thank you [Teresa] for your good sense of humor that gives us back the true measure of our littleness . . . and the immense greatness of God."

The older one gets the "lighter" life seems—or the more "light-heartedness" seems a virtue, a deeply spiritual and markedly Carmelite one. As suggested here, such light-heartedness is grounded in the ever present mystery of God and the vision of his immensity, alongside the little, though uniquely wonderful drop-in-the-bucket that each of us are. When I think of Holy Mother, yes, I think of this virtue as particularly strong in her.

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Keeping the blog from nodding off

In conclusion, I want to write about a new venture we're starting on our province website, that's www.carmelitefriarsocd.com.

If you go to this website, you will find in the menu a tab labelled "Blog Central." Click this, if you dare. There, on this page, you will find four further tabs, four separate blogs, for you to choose from. This number might grow in the future, let us hope.

The first of the four blogs is labelled "Provincial Blog." If you open this door, you'll find items—blog posts—sent in by friars and nuns of the province on a "come as you wish" basis.

The second is Fr. John Michael's personal blog, "Memos from Marylake." He sends in, more or less regularly, reflections, goings-on, other news items from his desk as superior of Marylake Monastery.

Then, third, there's the door marked "Poet and Contemplative." Behind it you'll find my effort to become a "blogger." I've chosen a topic, broad and flexible in its scope, which interests me personally and which, therefore, I'll enjoy writing about on a regular basis. Enter here at

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your own risk.

And lastly, and most importantly, there's the blog entitled "OCDS Central." Under this heading we will post submissions sent in by Seculars of the province. These submissions can be poems, reflections, meditations, or parables, even autobiographical or diary-like notes. They can be posted either under your name or anonymously, using a "handle" of some kind. You will notice some offerings have already been posted in this way—under the handle "A Carmelite Friend," for example.

Thus, I'm putting out a call for submissions to the "OCDS Central" blog. They should be short, of 500 to 1000 words. You can be as creative as you wish. Remember, though, that you are writing for a general audience. So, don't presume too much in the way of a deep acquaintance with Carmelite spirituality. Yet you can presume some, maybe as much as you wish.

You may ask for the submission to be posted either under your name or under a pseudonym. It's important to post each submission under one or the other, and that it be the same each time. That way all submissions by you can be archived under one link.

Obviously, we are Carmelites. Thus, what you submit probably ought to come out of our spirituality, our vocation, our spiritual experience, to some degree, although I suppose that's not absolutely necessary. Either the webmaster or I may edit your submission slightly, but only slightly—the occasional word, punctuation, no more. The submission is yours, not mine. All I ask is that you not veer off down some dark alley or get lost spinning pieties or offering up spiritually breathless ejaculations. Also, please don't get negative or ideologically judgmental or apocalyptic. Thank you.

Lastly, I suspect that, when it comes to blogging, many of you have fears about people leaving comments. Don't worry. I don't expect an avalanche to overwhelm us. And what we do receive the webmaster and I will monitor. Negative or inappropriate ones will simply not be posted. There will be no expectation that you respond to or even read the comments. But you would of course be free to do so.

Why a blog, you ask? Well, it can be a significant way of enhancing our presence online. It gives us an avenue for sharing ourselves and our vocation and spirituality with others. It lets us be creative and then share these creative insights and expressions with, potentially, a pretty big audience. And it helps keep the overall website vital, with people returning a little more frequently than they might do otherwise. And that can help foster connections with others who are generally interested in Carmel. Thus, it could, God willing, bring in a vocation or two.

"Blog Central" is, of course, a work in progress. But you can be part of that progress, if you wish. Just send your submissions to me. A Microsoft Word file, attached to an email, is the best way of doing that. But even if you don't send in anything, which I assume will be the case with most of you, I do invite you to visit the blog page regularly. It could become a significant way for us to talk to each other.

Message from Pope Francis to the Discalced Carmelite Order

To the Reverend Father Saverio Cannistrà Superior General of the Order of Discalced Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel

Dear Brother:

On the 500th anniversary of the birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus, I wish to unite myself, together with the entire Church, to the great family of the Discalced Carmel –religious women and men and seculars– in their act of thanksgiving for the charism of this exceptional woman.

I consider it a providential grace that this anniversary coincides with the Year of Consecrated Life, in which the Saint from Ávila shines like a sure beacon and role model of total surrender to God. It is yet another reason to look on the past with gratitude and rediscover “the inspiring spark” that has driven founders and their first communities (cf. Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People, November 21, 2014).

How beneficial to us is, even to this day, the testimony of her consecration, born from encounter with Christ, her experience of prayer as a continual dialog with God, her life in community grounded in the maternity of the Church!

Saint Teresa is above all a teacher of prayer. The discovery of the humanity of Christ was central to her experience. Moved by the desire to share this personal experience with others, she writes about it in a vital and uncomplicated style, accessible to everyone, because it consists simply in “an intimate sharing between friends....with Him who we know loves us” (Life 8, 5). Many times that same phrase becomes a plea, as if wishing to draw the reader into her interior dialog with Christ. Teresa’s prayer was not reserved for any single moment or part of the day; it sprang spontaneously during the most varied circumstances: “It would be a hard thing to bear if we were able to pray only when off in some corner” (Foundations 5, 16). She was convinced of the value of continual prayer, even if it were not always perfect. La Santa asks us to faithfully persevere, even in the midst of dryness, personal difficulties, or urgent needs that claim us.

To renew consecrated life today, Teresa has left us a great treasure full of concrete proposals, ways and methods to pray, that, far from closing us off into ourselves or merely providing a path to seek inner balance, makes us begin over again, always from Jesus as a starting point. It is an authentic school in growth of love of God and neighbor.

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As a result of her encounter with Jesus Christ, Saint Teresa lived “another life” (cf. Life 23, 1). Wanting to serve the Church, and in view of the grave problems of her day, she did not limit herself to simply observing the reality that surrounded her. From her circumstances as a woman and with the limitations of her health, she says: “I resolved to do the little that was in my power; that is, to follow the evangelic counsels as perfectly as I could and strive that these few persons who live here do the same” (Way 1, 2). That is why she began the Teresian reform, in which she asked her sisters not to waste time “discussing with God matters that have little importance” when the “world is all in flames” (Way 1, 5). This missionary and ecclesial dimension has always characterized the Discalced Carmel.

As she did then, so also today la Santa opens up new horizons for us, calls us to a great endeavor, to see the world with the eyes of Christ, to seek what He seeks and love what He loves.

Saint Teresa knew that neither prayer nor mission could be sustained without authentic community life. For this reason, the foundation of the monasteries she created was fraternity: there, “all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped” (Way 4, 7). She placed great importance on warning her religious about the dangers of

self-concern in fraternal life, which properly “lies in losing concern about ourselves and our own satisfaction” (Way 12, 2) and placing ourselves entirely at the service of others. To avoid this risk, the Saint from Ávila exhorts her sisters, above all, to practice the virtue of humility, which is neither to belittle oneself exteriorly nor interiorly shrink the soul, but for each to know what one can do and what God can do in her (cf. Spiritual Testimonies 30). The opposite is what she calls “accursed honor” (Life 31, 23), source of gossip, jealousy, and criticism that seriously harms relationships with others. Teresian humility is made of the stuff of self-acceptance, awareness of one’s own dignity, missionary courage, gratitude, and abandonment in God.

From these noble roots, Teresian communities are called to become houses of communion that witness to fraternal love and the maternity of the Church, presenting to the Lord the needs of our world torn by division and war.

Dear brother, I do not want to end without thanking the Teresian Carmels that entrust the Holy Father with special tenderness to the patronage of the Virgin of Carmel, and who accompany with their prayer the great challenges and threats the Church faces. I ask our Lord that the example of his life, like that of Saint Teresa, translucent in the joy and beauty of living the Gospel, may call many young people to follow Christ closely.

I impart my Apostolic Blessing on all the Teresian family. From the Vatican, March 28, 2015

Message from the Father General: Father Saverio Cannistrà

Happy birthday, Teresa!

Happy birthday, Teresa! That is the heartfelt wish of all who have known you, and therefore love you: your daughters and sons, your large family, that recognizes you as mother and teacher; those Christians who you have caused to discover “what a good friend Jesus is” and how our life is changed by learning to be with him in simplicity and love, limiting ourselves to gazing on him who gazes at us. That is the wish offered to you by so many believers of different religions whom you taught the strength and universal value or prayer humbly offered for a world that suffers. And lastly, that is the wish of so many men and women who have learned from you the unexplored dimensions of their humanity and whose hearts have grown, whose souls have breathed.

You did not keep for yourself the life the Lord gave you. You learned daily how to surrender it completely into His hands, so that He would make it His, His gift to the Church and the world. The less you belonged to yourself, the more you belonged to him; the more you gave yourself, the more He brought you into participation with His life, His relationship with the Father, and his offering for the world.

Thank you, Teresa, for the gift of that life spent for us! Thank you for continuing to accompany us with your teaching and discernment. You, of all people, know how easy it is to deceive oneself in the spiritual life, create false illusions for oneself. Thank you for “setting us straight,” for freeing us from tortuous paths that always circle around ourselves and close us off from others.

Thank you because you kindle hope within us again and always! Like Nicodemus, we too sometimes say, “How can a person once grown old be born again?” How can the Lord transform us, renew us? You never lost hope and have taught us not to lose it, because God does not leave at a halfway point those who are determined to reach the goal, the fount of living water: “It’s also necessary to begin with the assurance that if we don’t let ourselves be conquered, we will obtain our goal; this without a doubt, for no matter how small the gain, one will end up being very rich. Don’t be afraid that the Lord will leave you to die of thirst, for He calls us to drink from this fount. I have already said this and would like to say it many times, for the devil intimidates persons who don’t yet fully know the goodness of the Lord through experience, even though they know it through faith. But it is a great thing to have experienced the friendship and favor He shows toward those who journey on this road and how He takes care of almost all the expenses” (Way 23, 5).

Lastly, thank you for having taught us to laugh at ourselves, to not take ourselves so seriously! Thank you for your good sense of humor that gives us back the true measure of our littleness and misery and the immense greatness of God! With you we will eternally sing the infinite mercies of God.

Guidelines for Study Group Discernments for Profession

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS, of the Provincial Council

A friendly reminder to Study Group Councils about discernments for promises.

In your report to the Provincial Council, please include:

- The candidate's promise letter
- Details of the candidate's interview with the local council
- Council members' impressions of the candidate:
 - how the candidate gets along with other members
 - how the candidate contributes to the group
 - how well the candidate prepares for the meeting
 - how the candidate lives Carmelite spirituality
 - how the candidate did with the formation period's formation goals (statutes section XXI)
 - concerns about the candidate, if any
- The Local Council's vote
- The candidate's attendance records for the current formation period
- Reasons for absences and how the missed formation was made up

Thoroughness on your part is essential to proper discernment on our part!

For more information please see "Study Group Profession Discernment Process".

<http://www.thereocds.org/provincial-policy.html>

Oklahoma Province OCDS Financial Report

Oklahoma Province OCDS Financial Report
January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014

Balance as of January 1, 2014 \$52,510.30

Income:

Deposits	43,949.36	
Total Income:		<u>\$43,949.36</u>

Expenses:

Rome OCDS office	5,000.00	
Flos Carmeli printing & postage	435.51	
Central Office salary	2,373.15	

Provincial Council Expenses:

Congress Expenses	9,338.90	
PC meetings	11,388.04	
Visitation expenses	7,715.98	
Central Office expenses	221.81	
Provincial Delegate expenses	1,675.22	
V Centenary Conference Expenses	4,721.50	
PC website charges	200.00	
Misc. expenses	5,036.80	

Total Expenses \$48,106.91

Ending balance as of December 31, 2014 \$48,352.75

2015 Special Reserve Items:

Houston V Centenary Celebration	\$30,000
2017 Regional Congress Fund	\$10,000

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel, I write wishing you a blessed Easter.

May Christ Risen give you Joy and Peace, fruits of His Resurrection.

Our Lady, Mother of Hope, teach us faith and trust in Her Son.

Fraternally,

Fr. Alzinir F. Debastiani OCD



P. Fazzini, *Cristo risorto*

(Città del Vaticano, Aula Nervi)

Response to Father Debastiani's questions

January 14, 2015

Dear Father Debastiani,

The OCDS of the Oklahoma Province of the U.S. is very interested in exploring the “signs of the times” with you and the Friars as we begin by responding to your questions in preparation for the General Chapter. We profoundly appreciate the vision you offer for our interaction with the Friars as being a grace-filled blend of autonomy and harmonious collaboration. We’re so grateful to report that such is our experience! We are most blessed!

Twenty-six out of our total of 36 communities and study groups together, sent thoughtful responses to your questions. Following are brief summaries of the responses received plus input from our Provincial Council members:

The manner of being or state of fraternal relations among our Community and the Friars, Nuns and other Seculars in our Province:

Mutual respect, appreciation and harmonious relationships distinguish Carmelite Family interactions in our Province. There’s a very positive rapport among all.

Secular Carmelites particularly appreciate spiritual nurture from the Friars. Their purity of heart, humility, charity and humor, Carmelite knowledge and presence bless us and helps us to be better people and spiritually fruitful.

Seculars who live distances from monasteries would like to have more interactions with and communication from the Friars and Nuns. Given the impossibility of all of the needs being met, a frequently mentioned suggestion was for the Friars and Spiritual Assistants to allow their presentations and conferences to be recorded on CDs and DVDs and made available for purchase.

(A) The assessment of formation in general was positive:

Members on the overall are satisfied with the formation received in communities. Some members experience feeling overwhelmed by formation assignments – they felt they had too much material to cover and not enough time for deeper reflection.

Suggested improvements include: placing more emphasis on Carmelite spirituality and prayer, practical application, self-knowledge and the virtues; better formation for the formators; increase our use of Scripture; provide more guidance for the formation of the Definitively Professed

(B) Suggestions to better develop Carmelite Secular identity, vocation and living:

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Simplify First Promise preparation to focus more on Carmelite writings

Make study support materials more widely available perhaps on a global level, using websites, blogs, audio and visual resources including talks given by Friars at retreats, Congresses, etc.

Offer workshops for Directors of Formation and Formators, a venue to share ideas & problem solving

Examples of the more significant apostolic works accomplished by Seculars:

Individual Carmelite Seculars perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy, as spiritual directors, retreat facilitators, teachers of prayer, and volunteers who visit the sick and those in prison. Most Carmelite Seculars are active in parish and diocesan ministries. Liturgical, catechetical, pro-life, provide support and assistance to their pastors, and reach out to serve the poor. They share Carmelite spirituality with others in these ministries, and develop personal relationships.

Community apostolates include prayer, especially for the Church; ongoing study groups on prayer, open to the public; parish study group on Carmelite writings; days of reflection and Carmelite theme retreats open to the public; OCDS presentations to youth, to RCIA and to Confirmation candidates; visible OCDS presence at ministry fairs and other parish events; annual celebration of Carmelite feast days open to the Diocese; communities keep materials on hand for persons interested in Carmelite spirituality; participation in a Diocesan Pastoral Studies Institute's adult curriculum by teaching classes on Carmelite spirituality.

Many communities are planning significant outreach activities celebrating Holy Mother's Fifth Centenary

4. Venues to publicize OCDS and promote vocations:

Conversations about the vocation to Carmel with personal contacts and through apostolate activities

Articles about Carmelite spirituality and/or Carmelite saints in the diocesan paper

Visible OCDS presence at parish and diocesan events, especially personal example of discipleship. Involvement in these events to assist the pastors and to make Carmel better known. Members provide printed materials and answer questions about the Carmelite Order and vocation.

Brochures for persons interested in learning about Carmel and the vocation to OCDS, and for parishes on Carmelite Spirituality and the Prayer of Recollection

Specific days open to inquirers and OCDS Sponsored talks, retreats, days of reflection

Social media presence, Facebook, blogs, websites.

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Referrals from the nuns and friars, and from spiritual directors

Thoughts about organizing an OCDS International Council as a consultative body & organization:

Most members agreed that an OCDS International Council could provide a dynamic sense of international family, create an excellent venue for sharing concerns and ideas, and could gather support for the specific needs of global communities

Focus of the IC should be on spirituality and not more administrative tasks

Organize by creating regions and language groups limiting members to 10-15

Concerns were expressed about costs; use Skype and computer conference communication whenever possible

Suggestions to the Friars to consider in their response to the “signs of the times”:

Teach and preach prophetically on the times we’re living in

Share with the Seculars how the friars overcome obstacles to contemplative living, and how the virtues of humility, detachment and love are actualized and manifested in your communities, as an example for our community life

Encourage every friar to be comfortable accompanying a community and allowing himself to be a familiar presence to the Secular Family

The Secular Family would truly like to get to know each of the friars, in addition to those presently in leadership positions

Attachments are available should you find detailed information helpful. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us. We will continue to pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten all of your work, and the work of the Friars, throughout the whole process of the Chapter and going forward, as we continue to pray for all of the intentions of all of our dear Friars, our precious Nuns and wonderful Secular Family. May Christ’s Peace bless you.

*Wishing You a New Year That’s Blessed Beyond Your Wildest Dreams,
In Behalf of the Oklahoma Province Provincial Council U.S.A.,*

*Mary Kay Daniels, OCDS
President*

*Provincial Council Members: Chris Wood, OCDS; Kathy Dewine, OCDS; Claire Bloodgood, OCDS;
Jo Ann Murphy, OCDS*

The Provincial Council thanks you for the wonderful response we received from the Study

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Groups and Communities within the Province. A more detailed summary of all the feedback we received can be found below. Only those thoughts that were relevant at a global level were sent forward. However, the many comments we received will provide a wonderful treasury for further mining as we go forward.

Q. 1 - The witness of fraternal communion is a 'light that attracts' and evangelizes. How are fraternal relations between the members of your community and with the three expressions of the one Order (Friars, Nuns and other Seculars) in your area or Province? By Kathy DeWine

It is clear from all the responses that **a high priority should be placed on close, frequent and familial contact / correspondence with our OCD Friars.** For those OCDS communities living in close proximity to OCD Nuns, OCD Friars, and other OCDS communities, it appears relations are enhanced on all levels by frequent contact / mutual service / closer friendships / greater familial sense with the whole Order. For those who live far from OCD monasteries, the familial sense is lessened. One person spoke to the problem thus: "It's like family members who see each other only at funerals and weddings; they're happy to see each other, but the conversation is less that satisfying." The regular OCD communications from 'our men in Rome' are most welcome.

Secular Carmelites experience a distinctive quality in the preaching, teaching, and conversation of our friars, and in friendships with them, which derives from our share in the common charism of Teresian spirituality. **Our disposition to 'go deep' into God and the things of God, through prayer and contemplation, study, celebration of our Catholic sacraments and especially identifying with the Discalced Order of Carmel, is best fed and nurtured through formation and other interaction with our friars.** Most Seculars in our local chapters certainly do our best to fulfill our promises and live the life on a day-to-day basis, to form our members for life, but we feast when our friars come to direct our retreat, celebrate the Faith and the vocation with us, and socialize with us. They leave be-

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hind lasting fruits.

Understanding that in our Province we have only 18 friars to live their own vocations and serve the Nuns and Seculars, a common suggestion was that **recordings and videotapes be produced of their Conferences and talks as Spiritual Assistants, and made available for purchase to all the Seculars and Nuns for regular use in our formation and apostolates.**

Also, that when they come to town, we try to arrange for them to offer talks at a local parish, open to the public. We also realize that Seculars must initiate some of the correspondence and contacts according to the need, keeping in mind that our friars have their own works to do. Seculars living far from monasteries would like to have **better communication with / interaction with our Nuns as well.** We need to know what their needs are that we can help provide, and how our Carmelite conversations can be increased for mutual benefit. Again, our initiative is important in those contacts, but we who live far from the Nuns are often ignorant of appropriate ways to reach out to them besides making material contributions and reading their newsletters.

We all must enter into **a focused common Prayer for vocations** to our Order: Nuns, Friars and Seculars. Our Church, our world need the serious call to holiness of life according to St. Teresa's, St. John of the Cross's, and our other Saints' teachings, which is the mission of our vocation.

Q. 2 - How would you assess the formation you received in your Community? Have you any suggestions to make that would improve it, so that the members of the OCDS may be enabled to live more fully their lay Carmelite identity and vocation and contribute more to evangelization in the family, at work and in the social world? By Jo Ann Murphy

Overall Comment: There were some who felt there was too much pressure to cover the material and not enough time for deeper reflection and internalization. One person wondered whether the period of Formation for First Promise should be lengthened.

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Contents of the Current Curriculum

General comments: In some Communities there is a race to get through the material at the expense of time for reflection. For First Promise focus attention on the main Carmelite works. There needs to be more emphasis on Carmelite spirituality and on prayer at all stages. Do less reading and more application to lives. Put more emphasis on self-knowledge and the virtues. Spend more time on what is expected in everyday living of the Charism (prayer, growth, commitment). Review the contents of the required reading and update resources (based on suggestions from Communities).

Specific Suggestions:

Some want to move all non-Carmelite writings, for example Church documents, to post Final Promise. Some want more study on the mission of the Church, the Catechism, and apostolic letters. Others want more study of OCDS Constitutions, Statutes and the Ratio.

Remove “Historical Notes on Carmelite Order” by Gabriel Berry.

Need more formation on the Promise and the Beatitudes.

Add “Welcome to Carmel” by Aloysius Deeney.

Do more on discernment.

Study topics such as, “New Evangelization in Light of our Carmelite Vocation.”

Excellent. Leave it alone.

Local Council should be responsible for recommending material for formation.

Include Journey to Carith earlier.

Include some history and information on the LOTH.

Use Teresa’s Book of Life and Welcome to Carmel in Aspirancy.

Place more emphasis on the Charism of the Order. Then relate the 6 M’s to the Charism. Emphasize the Contemplative call.

Understand the way of perfection is not a rule book or set of tasks to be done, but a call to Union.

Emphasize the Prayer of Quiet.

Greater use of Scripture/Lectio Divina for deepening and strengthening prayer and friendship with God.

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More guidance for Definitively Professed formation.

Develop a formation class for the Definitively Professed on how to share their knowledge of prayer with others. How to evangelize?

Process of Formation

Overall Comments: Need more balance between volume of material and the ability to discuss.

Specific Comments:

Discussion and sharing in small groups is the most effective method. Members need to share their personal experience about how they are incorporating material into their daily lives. Sharing, love, and acceptance is an important part of formation that occurs in small groups. **“Formation in living the life of an OCDS comes from grace and is fostered by the loving support of Community Life.”** Therefore, attendance at meetings is important to the formation process. It is good to occasionally have a less structured formation class for the whole Community.

Each person should be given the opportunity to share what was most meaningful to them in the required reading and study questions.

The Director of Formation should set clear goals for First Promise Candidates.

There needs to be ongoing feedback from those in formation to the Director of Formation and Council members as they move along.

Assign a Professed mentor to walk with a person the year prior to making Definitive Promise. This should involve weekly contact (15-30 min max).

The experience and insight of Formators is important.

The Community should keep a record of the material each person has covered during formation in the permanent file.

Develop some audio-visual aids and study guides.

Formation should emphasize that prayer comes before works; works flow from prayer.

Use Lectio/Divina method to study and pray the Constitutions and Ratio.

Comments pertaining to specific Community issues:

Some think one should never be asked to write homework; others find occasional written assignments helpful.

No one should live in fear of anyone in the Community, especially not the Director of Formation, a Council member, or the Provincial Council.

Individuals should not be asked to miss Mass to accommodate Council interviews.

Additional Resources.

Need supplemental resources for teaching Carmelite Spirituality.

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Could there be a global, common website of curriculum materials?

Could someone collect and share good discussion questions for the material covered?

Create an audio library of talks given by Friars at retreats, Congresses, etc. The presence of friars is important in formation. More audio teaching aids are needed. Could friars create talks via YouTube or Podcasts on various formation topics catalogued by subject?

Create online Communities where members can chat and discuss material (blogs).

Some have established libraries of supplemental material that members can check out. They also include tapes from the Congresses that can be loaned out.

We need more Carmelite Spiritual Directors.

Augment our Provincial website with poems, meditations on what is studies, and articles.

Other Suggestions:

Reduce costs:

Hold Regional workshops for those Communities in proximity to one another for those who cannot afford to attend Congresses. Have PC visitators take the lead in setting these up. Videos of talks given at the Congresses could be shown with discussion following.

Develop strategies for cutting down the cost of formation materials. Find out what the third world does. Many on fixed income cannot afford to buy all that is required.

Flos Carmeli:

Give examples of what others are doing and provide ideas on how to spread the Carmelite charism.

Share ideas related to formation and Community issues.

Training:

Offer workshops for Directors of Formation so they can share ideas.

How to make small groups more effective by overcoming reticence to share.

Evangelization:

Look at the Ecomenical Carmelite Movement. Could we do something similar?

Encourage those who are capable leaders, speakers, and presenters to organize lectures, retreats and talks at schools and colleges.

Quicker response to questions submitted by Communities to the Provincial (ie, the PC?)

Q. 3 - Give some examples of the more significant and specifically *apostolic works* carried out (individually or communally)

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by the Seculars in your Community.

By Claire Bloodgood

Individual apostolates

Some communities cover a wide geographic area and find it difficult to have an apostolate in which all members can participate.

These communities focus more on individual apostolates, especially in parish-based ministries.

Individual Carmelite Seculars throughout the province perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Of special note among these are those who serve as spiritual directors, those who lead retreats and classes on deepening prayer, those who visit the sick and imprisoned to comfort and pray with them.

Most Carmelite Seculars are active in parish and diocesan ministries. These include Liturgical, teaching, pro-life, assistance to the pastor, and service to the needy. They share Carmelite spirituality with others in these ministries, taking advantage of the personal connections they develop.

Community apostolates include:

Prayer, prayer, prayer. For the Church, for the friars and nuns, for those in need.

Ongoing study groups on prayer, open to the public.

Parish study group on Carmelite saints' writings.

Classes on the Carmelite charism.

Days of reflection open to the public.

Carmelite theme retreats open to the public.

Arrange talks in various parishes, given by well known speakers.

OCDS presentations to Catholic youth, to RCIA and to confirmation candidates on Carmelite spirituality and the nature of the Order.

OCDS participation in parish and diocesan events, specifically to speak about mental prayer and Carmelite spirituality.

Availability to serve as guest speakers for RCIA, Christian formation classes, bible studies, etc.

Visible OCDS presence at ministry fairs and other parish events. Hand out brochures, holy cards, and scapulars. Books available for purchase.

Festive celebration of O.L Mt Carmel feast, open to the entire diocese, offered in a different parish each year.

Annual celebrations of various Carmelite feast days, open to the diocese.

Prison ministry, providing materials and personal contact.

Support for the Carmelite mission in Kenya.

Communities keep materials on hand for persons interested in Carmelite spirituality

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These include books, brochures, Carmelite magazines and other publications.

Many communities maintain a website offering information about the local Carmelite community, Carmelite saints' writings, prayer, the vocation to Carmel, and links to other Carmelite websites.

Communities use the artistic talents of their members to create Carmel themed clothing, music, banners, brochures, bookmarks, holy cards, artwork, and other articles.

On major Carmelite feast days, many OCDS communities attend Mass as a group.

They are generally allowed to display a picture and relic of the Carmelite saint close to the altar during Mass.

Members make themselves available to answer questions and distribute materials.

Of special note:

The San Antonio Texas OCDS community

is involved with the St Therese Basilica. In addition to other activities, they prepare talks/lectures/ weekend retreats in English and Spanish about Carmelite Saints, their teachings, and Carmelite Spirituality. They provide information regarding the arrival of the Carmelite Friars in San Antonio in the 1920s and the early history of the Friars and nuns in San Antonio.

Individual members also assist the local OCD friars with various apostolic works and helping OCD nuns as needed.

Atlanta Georgia study group

rents two tables at the annual Eucharistic Congress. They have several OCDS members available at all times to speak with people and to help them to discern if they might be called to Carmel.

They offer mainly ICS Publications' books and try to have at least one OCDS member who is fluent in Spanish available.

Jackson, Mississippi OCDS community

Community Brochures are displayed and distributed at the Carmelite Monastery Chapel entrance, bookstore, and at the annual Our Lady of Mount Carmel Feast Day Mass, in which all the area churches (12-15) and diocesan-wide churches are invited. The Community has been in charge of the music for the Annual Feast Day Mass and, in addition, being the choir and leading the congregation in singing. They serve as hosts greeting people and sharing about Carmel.

Tulsa Oklahoma study group

For three years, they have participated in the Diocesan Pastoral Studies Institute's adult curriculum by teaching classes on Carmelite spirituality. They intend to continue this outreach to all Catholics in the diocese.

Q. 4 - What means do you use to make the OCDS known and to promote vocations? By Claire Bloodgood

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The personal touch:

Many vocations come from Carmelite Seculars' personal example of discipleship.

OCDS members talk with individuals about the vocation to Carmel.

Many contacts are made through OCDS members' personal apostolates.

Communities get the word out:

Monthly meeting dates and contact person are listed in church bulletins and in diocesan calendar of events.

Vocation awareness ads on Catholic radio, promoting the OCD nuns and friars.

Involvement with the diocesan vocations office outreach.

Notices in church bulletins and Catholic newspapers announcing specific days that are open to inquirers:

Communities raise awareness:

Visible participation at Mass on Carmelite feast days with Scapular.

Visible community presence at Mass on regular meeting days.

Promises take place during Mass at the local parish church.

Social media presence, Facebook, blogs, websites.

Visible OCDS presence at parish and diocesan events. Involvement in these events to assist the pastors and to make Carmel better known. Members provide printed materials and answer questions about the Carmelite Order and vocation.

Articles about Carmelite spirituality and/or Carmelite saints in the diocesan paper.

The Fifth Centenary Celebration is expected to make Carmel better known to the Church at large.

Communities have on hand:

Brochures for individuals interested in learning about Carmel and the vocation to OCDS.

Brochures for parishes on Carmelite Spirituality and the Prayer of Recollection.

Communities offer:

OCDS-sponsored talks, retreats, and days of reflection, given by an OCD friar or by a speaker who is knowledgeable about the spirituality.

These are announced in Church bulletins, newspapers, websites, in addition to personal invitations.

Word of mouth:

A number of vocations come from referrals from spiritual directors.

As well as referrals from OCD nuns and friars.

Q. 5 - What do you think of setting up an OCDS *International Council* as a consultative body? How should it be or-

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ganized? By Mary Kay Daniels

- **In our opinion, the current Provincial Council and Interprovincial Council both serve all our needs well and we don't see a need for another governing body**
- **As a community we questioned the purpose and function of an OCDS international consultative body. Do we really need more layers...There are cultural barriers and language barriers. It might be an expensive redundancy. Some mentioned that we are trying to have a sustained connection with the Oklahoma Province...even that can be a challenge.**
- **Responders generally had no particular response to this question. Most who responded were favorable to such a consultative body, but had no specific ideas as to how it should be organized. A few who did provide a more elaborate response noted an assumption that such a council would be comparable to the Provincial Council but at an international level. Such would be helpful in establishing a more viable link with the secular order throughout the world. It would provide a more dynamic awareness and sense of family. It would also provide a means of sharing concerns, ideas for formation and community life, and awareness of needs of the Order throughout the world, which awareness might provide a means of support for needy communities.**
- **Most are not in favor and see this as too much administration. More emphasis should be placed on strengthening the local Provincial Councils.**
- An OCDS International Council as a consultative body would serve as another means of enriching our Order by providing contact with other areas world-wide for local communities, as well as information, input and community building. Organization wide, similar to the Provinces, with representatives from each Provincial Council.
- I think it would be a great way to share information and learn what other countries are doing to help evangelize. We have seen some of the benefits of an International Committee when the new Constitutions were written. This would be a good idea so that globally the OCDS will have one heart and soul as we live out our vocation in the various countries. Also some Provinces may not have to re-invent the wheel if another Province has something already in place and just tweak it to meet their needs. We could have an international website that represents all the OCDS communities worldwide. The implementation of this may not be so easy. We could have one representative per Provincial Council or areas of the world where we have OCDS members to make up the International Council. This Council will only have an advisory capacity and no legislative powers, it may only make recommendations which may or may not be applied by the individual Provincial Councils.
- We believe it would be good to set up an OCDS International Council as a consultative body. With the increasing secularization of society these, views from those of us living in the world would perhaps be helpful to the friars in knowing how to approach evangelization.
- The Council could be set up to represent a variety of language and geographical groups. They could communicate through the internet and convene for the General Chapter in Rome.
It could be helpful to Father General and his General Delegate to establish an OCDS Inter-

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national Council. Every Provincial Council should recommend individuals capable and willing to serve in such a capacity to Father General for his consideration and appointment.

- We feel that an International Council might be helpful in strengthening international communication and support if it were easily accessible to all OCDS members by means of the internet.
- We agree that a consultative body would be very beneficial and is much needed. It would help greatly in communication and hopefully give us a place to go to get a more swift answer to questions and/or help in leadership duties. It is very difficult to step into a leadership role when there is really no place to help clarify procedures or just to learn what is expected and how to discern how best to lead a Community.
- Most community members strongly favored this idea, making positive comments, such as, “There is certainly a sense of isolation from Carmelites in other countries for most of us and having representatives open this up would be good”; “It is a very good idea and will require lots of thought, planning and prayer to make it a reality”; “I think having a council at the international level would help expand the understanding and connections between OCDS in various parts of the world as well as with our friars”; “an excellent idea and a means to bring OCDS closer in prayer and Apostolic work”; “It could help promote unity and more understanding among the Order and encourage fraternal communion.”
- It could only meet every other year. It could probably be set up like the Provincial Council, but on a global level. Perhaps two representatives from each province could sit on the board. Participants would need to have a reliable means of communication with each other throughout the year. Different countries could host an event allowing the board to meet face-to-face for a “Congress” and shared prayer or a retreat.
- At least one Priest and one Secular might represent each country in which communities exist. It could use the provincial councils as a model, and have representatives from different areas where there are Secular Carmelites.
- Perhaps two Secular participants from every province could attend an International Council held every five years—one participant from the Provincial Council (probably the president) and the other chosen from the communities in that province at large. The participant chosen from the community level should be nominated by his/her community, one per community; all names submitted from the communities should be vetted and approved for possible inclusion by the Provincial Council, and then the final name should be drawn randomly from a hat after prayer. In that way—in addition to representatives coming from the top of the administrative structure—persons chosen from within the communities would be allowed to give the communities a unique and vibrant representative voice.

The International Council “may work if physical presence is not required and the council utilizes digital means to meet and collaborate.” “The ease and speed of electronic communication could certainly make it easier than ever before to do something on this scale.”

Q. 6 - What would you like to say or suggest to the friars who

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will be attending the upcoming General Chapter in the light of the challenges of today's world and the urgent need for evangelization ("signs of the times") as evidenced in your country?

By Kathy DeWine

Please do what you can to live your own vocations in community, and let us get to know all of you. We love our relationships with those who are "on call" as Provincial Delegate or Spiritual Assistants for some groups, but the rest are often strangers. One suggestion was for the friars to take turns writing in the *Flos Carmeli* (OCDS provincial newsletter) and *Gentle Breezes* (friars' newsletter), to let us hear all the voices, get to know more of our friars. The nuns, too, could give the pen to different members of your communities. Include photos of the OCD communities, not just formal group portraits, to help us put faces to the written or taped voices. Social media was frequently mentioned as a way to increase frequency and effectiveness of mutual communication. Some of that is already happening; we need more. One request was to "teach and preach on the times we're living in" -- challenges to live this contemplative life / virtues of humility, detachment and love -- in the world, in accordance with Pope Francis's strong call to evangelization by example and social intercourse. Secular members can participate in some of this too, with Q&A offerings which represent our members' needs.

One suggestion, for the benefit of those communities who do not live close to our friars or nuns, is that each community has a friar attached to them for special fraternal accompaniment and additional formation. "The Order should have one website [OCD4OCDS?] where all [records and] relevant information from the Order is available for all of our members. ... This will help the Order to guide communities around the world in any major changes and events."

News from around the province

1. Baton Rouge—submitted by Patricia Ricord, OCDS

Our beloved sister in Carmel, Marie Eve Chenevert (Eve), passed away on July 7, 2014 at the age of 94.



Eve joined our Community shortly after it was founded and made her First Promise on April 1, 1984, and her Definitive Promise, on March 15, 1987. She took vows on October 16, 1988.

Eve was tiny in stature but great in heart. She was a devoted wife to her husband, C. Shafter Chenevert for 43 years, until his death. She adored their two sons, C.S. “Skip” Chenevert, Jr., also deceased, and their surviving son, Timothy Chenevert.

Her love also extended to her 17 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and 8 great great grandchildren.

Eve was deeply devoted to her Carmelite vocation, and when her eyesight began to fail, she wept over no longer being able to read the Divine Office. Well into her late 80’s, Eve could be seen driving the block or two to daily Mass at St. Thomas More Church.

It was there that over half of the Community members gathered, in a place of honor she had designated, for the Mass of Christian Burial on July 10, 2014.

Our precious Eve is dearly missed, but we thank God for her long and truly inspiring life.

Her formal obituary ends with these words: As Eve would say, “This is not goodbye; it’s until we meet again.

Until then, dear Eve, may you rest in the peace of Christ.

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2. Baton Rouge—submitted by Frances Locker, OCDS

Below are two photos from Greg Lawrence's First Profession held in Baton Rouge, LA. at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church on Sunday, November 9, 2014. Pictured is Formation Directress Mary Rolfs with Greg Lawrence with Fr. Philip Eapin.



3. Covington—submitted by Mary Engler, OCDS

A solemn Ceremony and Mass was celebrated at the Carmelite Monastery in Covington, LA in the Guardian Angel Chapel on Saturday, January 31, 2015 for the purpose of officially erecting this Carmelite Secular Community in the Archdiocese of New Orleans by canonical decree. Members of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit Community joyfully celebrated the Canonical establishment of their Community after many had waited almost 17 years for this day. Father Bonaventure Sauer, OCD was Celebrant and Father Jerome Earley, was Concelebrant.

Father Jerome Earley founded the prayer group on April 12, 1997. Sister Edith Turpin, Prioress of the Covington Monastery, was the catalyst in forming the group. The first members were clothed on June 13, 1998. In the years since, a number of Carmelite Friars, including Father John Michael, Father Gregory Ross, and Father Sam Anthony, have assisted the group in assessing the spiritual needs of the community, establishing it as a Study Group and guiding the members through several leadership elections and changes. The Friars also helped the Community develop meaningful formation programs and assisted in addressing the spiritual needs of existing and new members.

Father Bonaventure Sauer presided over the Canonical establishment event after guiding the Community through the process of canonical approval. In May 2013, Fr. Bonaventure gave permission to the Community to begin the procedure for Canonical Establishment. On February 7, 2014 all documents requested for Canonical Establishment were submitted to Fr. Bonaventure and February 19, 2014 the community received Fr. Bonaventure's approval to proceed. President Pat Simon and Father Bonaventure met with Archbishop Gregory Aymond on November 3, 2014 to seek his consent and approval. Archbishop Aymond gave his approval and forwarded a hard copy of his approval to Fr. Bonaventure to be sent to Rome. On December 12, 2014 Fr. Bonaventure received a copy of the decree for Canonical Establishment of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit from Rome.



Father Bonaventure Sauer Reading Decree of Canonical Establishment

In a decree given at Rome on December 8, 2014, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Father Saverio Cannistra, OCD Superior General and Father Alzinir F. Debastiani, OCD, General Delegate, accepted "...the petition to erect a Community of our Secular Order with the title of

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Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, in the city of Covington, LA, in the Archdiocese of New Orleans (USA) ...” Father Cannistra went on to decree “...Having received the consent of the Most Reverend Ordinary of the Archdiocese, I most willingly grant to Reverend Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD, according to canon 312 of the Code of Canon Law, the faculty to erect, in my name, the above-mentioned group into a Community of the Secular Order of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel...”

After the decree was read, members of the Community offered these prayers of the faithful - through the Providence of God, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, all graces may be supplied to the Church for accomplishing the work of Christ with apostolic zeal and for the fulfillment of the mission of the Discalced Carmelite Order throughout the world; for marriages and families that they may be strengthened in faith, hope and love; for their Community that it may be committed to this life of prayer, nourished by faith, hope and love to live the presence and mystery of the living God; in thanksgiving for Canonical Establishment and that each member would be fortified and strengthened through lives of prayer and service in Carmel; brothers and sisters in Carmel who are burdened by difficulties may receive Our Lord’s grace and healing Spirit to strengthen them and alleviate their trials and for Carmel’s deceased members that through the Mercy of God, they may gaze upon His Face in Heaven and intercede for us.

Father Sauer congratulated and encouraged the Community. He reminded them of the great responsibility of Canonical Establishment but also the great joy the members will no doubt experience.

Past President, Patty Still offered the following reflection:

“...I am so grateful for this gift of being a Secular Carmelite, and I know you are too. My heart is filled with awe as we celebrate this special occasion - together in praise and thanksgiving to our all loving and merciful Holy Triune God and Our Blessed Mother Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Today – Together – let’s remember that all we think, say and do daily is a prayer if done for the Glory of God in Love and Thanksgiving to Him for all that He has done for us in His Love and Mercy...”



Sister Edith Turpin welcomed the Community to a celebration in the Carmelite Cloister when Mass was complete. Many members had never been in the cloister and felt privileged to be invited into such a serene and holy place. Members were treated to food, music and dance; all was festive and everyone had a marvelous, joyous afternoon in perfect weather.

Significantly, this year, 2015, marks the 500th anniversary of the birth year of the Foundress of the Discalced Carmelite Order, St. Teresa of Avila, who was born on March 28, 1515. The Covington Community is under the juridical authority of the OCD Friars of the Province of St. Therese and is a mem-

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ber of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Province of St. Therese. In conjunction with the New Orleans Chapter, the Covington Community will be commemorating the 500th anniversary at a Grand Celebration on June 20, 2015 at 9:30am at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Shrine in New Orleans.

No doubt, our Community will be basking in the joy of this day for many months and years to come!

4. Louise Frances Morello-McConnell

1913 — 2015



Louise Frances Morello-McConnell entered eternal life on January 6, 2015, just eight days before her 102nd birthday. She was born in Hearne, TX on January 14, 1913 to John Paul and Frances Viviano. She was the middle child between two brothers —Paul and Thomas Viviano. Upon marrying Louis Sam Morello of the Hearne area, the couple moved to Houston, TX and opened a grocery store in the West End during the Great Depression. Louis and Louise had three children: **Fr. Sam Anthony Morello of the Discalced Carmelite Order**; Mary Frances Griffin-Hamby, a long-time educator at St. Francis Episcopal Day School and at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral School; and Louis Sam Morello, Jr., Doctor of Clinical Psychology.

Louise and her husband in 1947 were among the Charter Families of the Catholic Parish of St. Theresa in Memorial Park. She was an active member of the Women's Club, the Altar Society and the Choir. She was also a member of Caritas and of the Catholic Daughters of America. She loved playing the piano and singing, and enjoyed bridge and poker. Besides being an excellent Italian cook, at Christmas, her favorite Season, she delighted in baking Italian cookies with her sisters-in-law. For a long stint she walked daily, often two miles a day, with close friends. Upon the sudden death of her husband in 1964 she continued operating the 35 year old family business for an additional five years. After selling the store, she regularly attended daily Mass to her great comfort.

In 1974 Louise married Herdon Alvis McConnell, DDS. She was delighted to travel extensively with him. With 'Doc' McConnell's encouragement, Louise volunteered at Texas Children's Hospital for about five years. After ten years of marriage, Doc predeceased her.

Along with your favorite charities, Memorial Contributions (and Mass intentions) may be directed to Marylake Carmelite Monastery, 5151 Marylake Drive, Little Rock, AR 72206 (Attention: Fr. Sam Anthony Morello). Like in the case of Louise Morello-McConnell, May God bless us all with loving faith in life, and deep peace at death! Amen.

5. Houston—St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face Carmelite Study Group

Our dearest Marie Cansino-Lim Thursday, Feb. 12, at St. Dominic Villa in Houston. Marie was 74 years old. She was born on Sept. 15, 1940, in Pasay City, Philippines. Marie made her Definitive Promise in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites Aug.23, 2008. She is survived by one daughter, Christina Pao.

Because her daughter was unable to find Marie's scapular as she was dying, two members of the community bought a small one. Her daughter put it on her, and she died a half hour later.

May Marie rest in Eternal Peace, and may perpetual light shine upon her.

6. Houston—Most Holy Trinity and St. Joseph—submitted by Rebecca McGinnis, Director of Formation

The community of the Most Holy Trinity and St. Joseph of Houston had its annual retreat from Feb. 27 to March 1. Retreat master was Fr. Greg Ross, OCD. The theme of the retreat focused on St. Teresa's *Life- -a Spiritual Autobiography*. On Sunday, March 1, Cruz Coronado made Vows. Pictured below, left, are community members plus a guest who attended the retreat. Below, right, is Cruz making her Vows.



7—New Orleans—Community of Our Lady of Prompt Succor—submitted by Shelley Thomas, president

Fr. Jerome Early spoke on “Memory and Imagination According to St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross” for a Day of Recollection sponsored by the New Orleans, La. Community of Our Lady of Prompt Succor on Jan. 17, 2015. Several communities were in attendance from surrounding areas such as Covington, La., Baton Rouge, La., The Gulf Coast and Lafayette, La. Father was given a standing ovation for his excellent presentation giving much spiritual food to meditate upon for all members attending the Day of Recollection.



Father Jerome Earley, OCD

*Father Earley with The OCDS
New Orleans Community of
Our Lady of Prompt Succor*



8. Houston—Most Holy Trinity OCDS community—submitted by Elizabeth Ogilvie

The Most Holy Trinity OCDS Community played host to all Houston communities Dec. 6, 2014, at the parish of St Philip the Apostle in Huffman, Texas. Our celebration began with Morning Prayer and took full advantage of the date, with a slight departure from the Advent season, while still preparing for Christmas. Our party was titled The Saint Nicholas Party with a theme focused on the marvelous diversity of St Nicholas – or Nikalaus, Mikolaj, Santa Claus, Father Christmas - revered throughout the Christian East, West, Protestant, and even secular world. The host community began the social with a short multiple choice quiz which shared a few facts about St Nicholas, along with some unfamiliar traditions and stories surrounding the saint. In turn many of the attendees began to share their own cultural heritage and traditions about St Nicholas and Christmas. Some of the cultures represented among our membership were from the countries of Spain, Germany, Italy, The Philippines, Jamaica, Mexico and France. Following these trivial pursuits, we turned to the entertaining White Elephant game. It was no surprise that Carmelite paraphernalia of any kind created the most excitement and exchange activity - also known as stealing. The party was well attended, even though Huffman, Texas, is quite out of the way for most members. The true blessing of the day was we prayed together, spent time together, met other OCDS members for the first time, and renewed former acquaintances.



White Elephant exchange under the command of Bridgette McMillan (standing)

9. Little Rock, AR --submitted by Susan Hooks, OCDS, and Tricia Cromwell, OCDS

Geraldine L. White, OCDS, member of the Little Rock community of Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew, died Feb. 16, 2015, at the age of 80. She was born on Jan. 4, 1935, at Makawao, Maui, Hawaii, the eighth of nine children. Unfortunately, no photo of Gerri was available.

Gerri was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, John P. White; four brothers and one sister; as well as two of her sons, Robert and Jim White. She was survived by three sisters; one daughter, Renee Minicozzi; two sons, John and Jeffrey White; three granddaughters; one grandson; and many nieces and nephews.

Taking as her Carmelite name Rose Veronica of the Sacred Heart and Our Sorrowful Mother, Gerri made her First Promise in 1996 and her Definitive Promise in 1999. She took infirm/homebound status in 2005.

Gerri lived a life of prayer and cared for her family and her beloved son Jim, who had special needs, all his life. And that special needs child, according to doctors, wasn't supposed to live to be an adult; but under her loving care, he lived to about age 50.

Members of our community who knew Gerri will miss her joyful spirit and her sense of humor amidst her many sufferings. She was always thankful for our prayer support, and we were thankful for hers. May she rest in eternal peace.

10. San Antonio—submitted by Susan King, OCDS



Marion Francis Keller, OCDS, age 86, of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Therese Community in San Antonio, Texas, passed away on Dec. 30, 2014 following a long illness. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Keller, OCDS, three children, 10 grandchildren, five great grandchildren and one sister. He and Betty recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. Born Jan. 29, 1928, he received a BBA from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX and served in the Infantry in the Korean War for two years, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He was a member of St. Joseph's Parish in Amarillo, Texas, for 35 years and also spent 35 years working as an Inventory Supervisor in two Atomic Energy Ordnance Plants. After retirement, he devoted his life to helping as a volunteer for multiple fundraising and remodeling projects for his parish, and was a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus and totally involved with their activities. He is remembered as a wonderful role model for his family, co-workers, fellow parishioners, friends and neighbors, always willing to give of himself, and never asking anything in return. After moving to San Antonio, he entered the San Antonio OCDS Community in 2005, made his First Promise on July 13, 2008, and his

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Definitive Promise on Oct. 9, 2011. Marion was a gentle and humble man, who loved to be with his Carmelite Community, and to study and live the life of Carmelite Spirituality. His discussions with other members were always kind, thoughtful and shared with love. This gentle servant of God has made a lasting impression on all those who have known him and he will be truly missed. His Rosary/Vigil service was held at Little Flower Basilica on Jan. 1, 2015 and the Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated at Our Lady of Grace Parish in La Coste, Texas, on Jan. 2, 2015. He was buried at Our Lady of Grace Cemetery adjacent to the church. Memorials may be made to Little Flower Parish, 824 Kentucky Ave, San Antonio, TX 78201 for the remodeling of the Basilica Project

11. Savannah—submitted by Bryan G. Milne, OCDS

Savannah OCDS Community of Our Lady of Confidence and St. Joseph is proud to announce that Dr. Diane Harris and Mrs. Denise Lynch made their First Promise Jan. 3, 2015, at Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery. Our Spiritual Assistant, Daniel Firman, JCL, Vicar General of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, officiated.

Please visit our Websites: Our Lady of Confidence and St. Joseph OCDS Community: savannahocds.org,

Cathedral of St. John the Baptist: diosav.org,

Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery: Carmelofsavannah.org



12. Savannah—submitted by Denise Lynch, OCD

The Savannah OCDS Community of Our Lady of Confidence and St. Joseph celebrated the March 19 Solemnity of St. Joseph at their March 7 meeting at Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery.



Members of the group were provided with a St. Joseph Novena leading up to the meeting. The community celebrated the occasion with a special brunch.

Our Spiritual Assistant, Rev. Daniel F. Firmin, JCL, VG of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist blessed the feast table bread honoring the celebration St. Joseph Feast Day on March 19.

Margaret Milne, OCDS, coordinator of the event, stated, “We will be using St. Joseph, our patron, in studying the virtues throughout the year. “