

Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Province Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Summer 2017

Volume XXVII No. 3



From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Hello Carmelites,

The Seculars certainly do have a lot going on in our Province this year. Local Council elections, a new Provincial Council, new Statutes, and the 2017 Congress in beautiful San Antonio.

Speaking of the Congress, as you all know, each Community is to send their President and an elected representative to the Plenary Council meeting (November 3rd during the Congress). Each Study Group is to send one elected representative.

“Elected representative” means a member of the community elected by the members to represent them at the Plenary Council meeting. It can be anyone. Please choose your representative as soon as possible. The Congress is filling fast and we want to be sure they have a place.

Also, it's not too early for communities to send agenda items for the Plenary Council to discuss. We will be addressing the challenges and concerns of the OCDS members and communities in the province. Communities may discuss with their Council what they would like to have on the agenda, and the presidents can send topics to me at ocds.bloodgood@suddenlink.net.

Our friars have been very busy too. They held their elections during the spring and had their Chapter meeting the last two weeks in May. Your Provincial Council met with the friars during their Chapter meeting. We reported on the state of the OCDS in the province. Topics included the new model for putting on our OCDS congress; communications; OCDS internet presence; the revised statutes; progress on the revised formation guidelines; plans for next year's leadership workshop; and visitations. We discussed OCDS struggles, concerns, and strengths.

An important topic was fostering the connections between our OCD friars and our OCDS communities. Most of the friars expressed their willingness to visit the OCDS communities for retreats and days of reflection. They love to be asked.

The friars send you all their deep gratitude for the financial help that the OCDS continually provide. Please know that you are very much appreciated and are in their daily prayers.

The formation guidelines are coming along nicely. The Revision Team is nearly finished with them. We'll be asking the communities for feedback as soon as the guidelines are ready.

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From the President's Desk

By Claire Bloodgood, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council—

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Work on updating the provincial policies and best practices continues. We have been posting them to the provincial website as they are completed.

Current policies can be found on the OCDS provincial website here:

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

“Best practices” links from the website’s home page <http://www.thereocds.org/>.

What’s the difference between a “policy” and a “best practice” you ask? Well, policy is policy, and best practice is not. Policy is how things are expected to be done, the standard practice for the Province. “Best practice” is a recommendation or example; communities can use other ways that work well for them as long as they follow the Constitutions and Statutes.

You may be interested to see that the policy on communities’ absence policies has been simplified. There are also updated statements on readmission, isolates, infirm members, leave of absence, and fundraising.

Speaking of the website – Mary Bellman, Provincial Council member and our new webmaster, will be updating it over time. Among other things, there’s a new page for inquirers and separate folders under “policies” for Study groups and for Groups in Development.

Many, many thanks to Elizabeth Korves, who brought us into the 21st century. You all will remember Elizabeth as President of the PC. Elizabeth had served as our provincial webmaster for many years and made the website a very useful resource for Councils and members. God bless you Elizabeth!

With Prayer for Holiness, Peace, Joy and Bountiful Love in Christ for All,

Claire Bloodgood, OCDS

President, Provincial Council for the OCDS Oklahoma Province

On Behalf of the Council Members:

Jo Ann Murphy, OCDS

John Stevens, OCDS

Anna Peterson, OCDS and

Mary Therese Bellman, OCDS

New Provincial—Father Sephen Sanchez, O.C.D.

Dear brothers and sisters in Carmel,

We are pleased to announce the election of Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD, as Provincial of the Province of Saint Thérèse.

Many of you already know and love Fr. Stephen from his excellent talks and classes. Fr. Stephen has always been very supportive of the Carmelite Seculars, serving as spiritual director, retreat master, and speaker.

Father Stephen was born and raised in San Antonio, TX in (as he puts it) the last century. His parents are Juan Sánchez and Teresa Martínez de Sánchez. One of four siblings, three still remain.

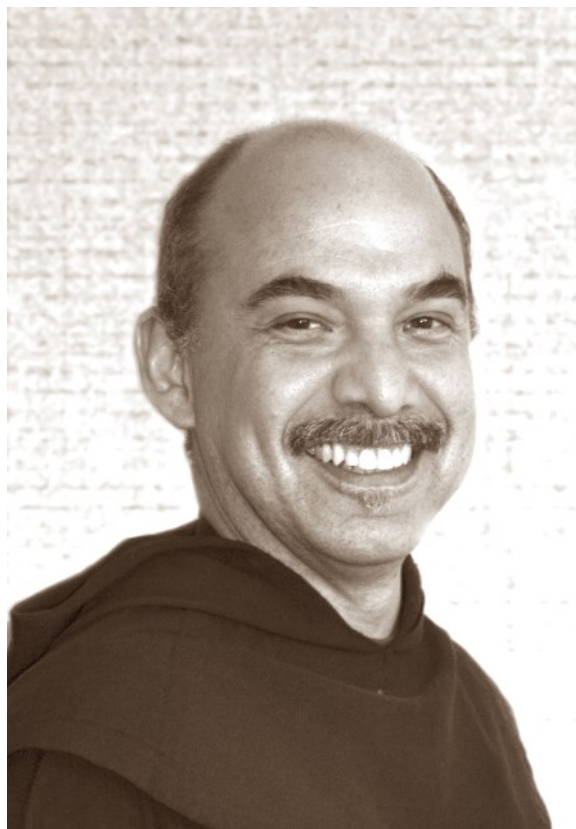
Fr. Stephen was accepted into the Monastery of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Therese in San Antonio in February of 1983. He made his Solemn Profession of Vows in 1989. His Priestly Ordination was in 1992 at the Basilica and National Shrine of St. Therese and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, in San Antonio, TX.

Fr. Stephen earned a B.A. in psychology with a minor in philosophy from St. Mary's University in 1987, and earned Master of Divinity from the Oblate School of Theology in 1992, both in San Antonio. He completed an intensive academic year course (1992-1993) in the Spirituality of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross in Avila, Spain at the "Centro Internacional de Avila" [currently known as CITES].

Fr. Stephen served the Discalced Carmelites of the Province of St. Therese as Vocation Director (1993-1996) and Superior of Marylake (1996-2002).

He has also served in various administrative positions and is currently serving the Order as Superior of the Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas, TX since 2002. <http://www.mountcarmelcenter.org/>

Fr. Stephen has been involved for several years in the formation program for the Permanent Diaconate program of the Diocese of Dallas and also serves as adjunct Spiritual Director for Holy Trinity Seminary also in Dallas.



Please welcome Fr. Stephen as our new Provincial.
Keep him in your prayers and know that you are in his.

Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

I wish to share with you a bit about our recent Provincial Chapter, “celebrated” the last week of May, first week of June, this year. And, yes, they used to speak of “celebrating” the Provincial Chapter, although today we speak more of “celebrating” its close. Anyway, I’ll have things to say about it in due time. But before I do, let me turn right away to a topic all of you are anxious, if not actually dying, to hear about. I’m referring, of course, to the question of who will be your Delegate this coming triennium. Will you have to continue massaging the ego of your present Delegate? Or will you get to work with a more mature friar?

[The sort of androgynous-looking fellow to the left is not your new provincial Delegate, nor is he a friar. His name is Emil Sauer, sharing the same last name as your current Delegate, but that’s about it. He was a famous pianist and not-so-famous composer of the 19th Century, his dates being 1862-1942.]

Alas, I don’t exactly have the answer. We friars are dragging out the suspense. Each triennium the new assignments and old reassignments, as well as each friar’s conventuality—that is, which community he is assigned to—are usually determined immediately after the Chapter. This triennium we’re doing something different. Later on this year, or maybe early next year, we as a Province will gather again, this time for only a week, and—joined by a facilitator—will try to work our way through to a couple hard decisions. Depending on those decisions, then, work assignments and offices and conventuality will be decided. So, everything is on hold for the time being.

Thus, in answer to the burning question, the one writing this report is the one continuing as your Delegate for the time being. Eventually I might be asked to carry on for the whole triennium. Or I might be asked to do something else, with another friar taking my place as Delegate. Or we might decide to reorganize our ministry to you, the OCDS of the Province, so as to see to it that the friars are more fully available to you and your communities. That is something many of you have expressed a desire for, seeing how it has been your experience that having regular contact with the friars, be it only once or twice a year, usually affords you and your communities a clearer, stronger sense of the vocation. But this is not a decision we’re ready to make yet. When we do, you’ll be the first to know. In the meantime, be patient, live in mystery, and continue to massage the ego of your present Delegate, who is still your Delegate, mind you.

The 2017 Provincial Chapter (first week)

The Chapter opened with Evening Prayer on Monday, May 22, during which Fr. Stephen Sanchez was officially installed as Provincial. [In the photo on the right, taken at the 2014 congress in Atlanta, Fr. Stephen stands in the middle ringed by (now deceased) Fr. John Michael to his right, Fr. Alzinir, OCDS General Secretary, behind him, and yours truly to his left; we are vested and ready to begin mass.] Of course, being followers of Jesus, following Fr. Stephen’s installation, we then enjoyed a simple, yet sumptuous meal, as well as each other’s company, celebrating this present moment while leaving the future to God.



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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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The next day, Tuesday, we keep a quiet day in order for each of us to collect himself in the Holy Spirit. It's good to remind ourselves, one, that we are here to conduct a Chapter and not something else; and, two, that intense discussion undoubtedly lies ahead, to which we must give ourselves generously, since it is the Holy Spirit who ultimately supplies any significance our discussions might have. [Of course, it never hurts to ask the prayers of our sister in Carmel, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who also happens to be the Patroness of our Province. Here, to the right, you can see how she waits patiently, more than ready and willing to pray for us. Notice the hands already folded.]



On the agenda for the first week was, for starters, the reading and discussion of the outgoing Provincial's—Fr. Luis's—*State-of-the-Province Report*. This report reviewed the triennium now behind us and then offered up some themes—some specific needs, concerns, prospects—that we ought to address as a Province looking forward to this new triennium. Fr. Luis did a fine job with his report and set the right tone for the Chapter.

Let me take this opportunity to mention, on your behalf and on mine, the supportive, caring, respectful attitude of heart with which Fr. Luis fulfilled his responsibility as Provincial these past six years towards his Secular brothers and sisters. Speaking as his Delegate, he was always easy to work with and prompt whenever I had to ask anything of him. He constantly wanted to know how the OCDS communities of the Province were doing. And he set in motion something I hope will continue this coming triennium, which is our holding an annual meeting of the two Provincial Councils, that of the friars and of the Seculars. I have no doubt that Fr. Stephen will follow along this same line in his ministry to the OCDS.

During the first week of the Chapter we also, for one, read and discussed heatedly the Visitation Report prepared following the pastoral visitation of our Province this past April. This visitation was made by Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCDS, of the Washington or eastern province, although currently serving as the English-speaking Definitor. His report raised for us some fundamental needs we are facing as a Province.

Next, we elected our Provincial Council, among whom you'll find, as lowly Fourth Councilor, your present Delegate, along with Fr. Luis as Vicar Provincial, second in command, and Fr. Jorge as Second Councilor, with Fr. Ralph; as Third Councilor. Then, on Thursday, we were joined by the OCDS Provincial Council. They reported to us on the Seculars of the Province, of course, and on how we friars might better serve them. It was a good meeting, and I think your Provincial Council felt truly listened to—except perhaps by your Delegate, who tended to interrupt and speak for the Council until he got a handle on himself and sealed his lips, thanks to a nudge from the Holy Spirit.

As I said, the OCDS Provincial Council spoke on the relation of the friars to the Seculars, viewed from their perspective, addressing the question of what the Seculars want or hope for from us, on how you might best assist us, that is. Your Provincial Council's insights led to a helpful and, I hope, fruitful discussion. I do think that, with an except or two, the friars understand and respect your vocation and your place, with its proper autonomy, within the Province. I also think that the friars are quite happy to serve you as best we can, given our limitations.

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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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[During this first week we also discussed each house of the Province and its particular needs. Of course, the Basilica gets special attention. To the left is a photo of the interior of the Shrine in San Antonio—if you can see through the darkness, that is. Those of you who will be attending the Congress in November will have an opportunity to attend mass there. Despite its significant renovation needs, the Basilica does provide its visitors with a quiet, prayerful setting. After all, it's a shrine to St. Therese. And so there's something spiritually enriching, consoling, comforting about it.]

The 2017 Provincial Chapter (second week)

Following a break for the weekend, the Chapter reconvened. This second week involved the heavier business of the Chapter. Each house reported about itself financially. The business office of the Province also gave such a report. [On Friday morning of the previous week, as I forgot to mention, we had been joined by Mrs. Susana Cantu, our executive director, who had presented to us a strategic plan (of sorts) for how the Province might best reorganize itself and so better utilize the lay staff who serve us so generously and with such competence.]

Then we reviewed our *Provincial Acts*, which resemble your *Provincial Statutes*, except that in our case they have to be updated every three years during the Provincial Chapter. There are *Provincial Policies* as well to read, discuss, amend, and approve. Among them was a brand new policy on the use and possible abuse of Social Media by us friars which the author of this report helped to prepare. Luckily I received help from the webmaster who oversees our province website. She is very knowledgeable and hugely competent. As for myself, I find the topic very interesting, with all sorts of ramifications one might never have predicted. Also, any such policy seeks to walk that often fine line between respect for personal privacy and the needs of the Province, of our community life and formation, and of the vocation we are together trying to remain faithful to.

The Chapter involves further deliberation over such things as the formation process of the Province, including ongoing formation. But I'll leave it at that. All in all, I'd say it was a productive, well-run, well-organized, and generally relaxed—vs. tense, conflict-laden—Chapter, where one could speak freely and fully. We do try to let each friar be heard, and to arrive at consensus in our decisions. And this can mean that our discussions can seem to drag on a bit. But it is what it is. That's how we humans let the Spirit work through us, in and through the intention on our part not to control the discussion nor seek to shape its results to our liking.

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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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[Below is a photo of the assembled friars of the Province gathered following mass in the chapel, at Mt. Carmel Center. Yes, we are few, only 17 in all. The Center, for its part, served us very well as a place to host this meeting.



For any of you wondering, here are the names of the friars pictured. Front row, left to right: Fr. Jim Curiel, Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte, Fr. Stephen Sanchez, Fr. Sam Anthony Morello, Fr. Ralph (or Raul) Reyes, Fr. Henry Bordeaux, and Fr. Jorge Cabrera. In the back, from left to right: Br. Alejandro (he has a peculiar last name, which I can't remember right now), our postulant, who is from Cuba, Fr. Luis Joaquin Castaneda, Fr. John Magdalene Suenram, Fr. Marion Bui, Fr. Jerome Earley, Fr. Jesus Sancho, Fr. Jenaro de la Cruz, His Exaltedness (in height) Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, Fr. Gregory Ross, and the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove]

An apology

I've just finished attending the Symposium sponsored by the Carmelite Institute of North America held at Loyola University in Chicago, another fine event. The theme was "Pope Francis Points the Way for Carmel," or something like that. If you are interested in obtaining CDs or DVDs of the talks, go to either

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Report from the Provincial Delegate

By Father Bonaventure Sauer, O.C.D.

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carmeliteinstitute.net, under the “Media” tab, where in time you'll be able to purchase them—they're not available just yet—or you can go to gotruth.com/Carmel and find them there.

This Symposium is not something I need to apologize for. One can only boast about it. Rather, I have to voice a sincere and much needed apology to all of you concerning another matter. I have been too neglectful of my responsibilities as OCDS Delegate these past months. For one, I've been even less prompt than I usually am when it comes to emails. (Yes, “prompt” is not a word either you or I associate with me. But I've been even worse than usual). For all this I am very sorry.

Anyway, I've felt very distracted lately. Some of that is personal, some having to do with my health. But there's also been pressing on me the things I needed to do to get ready for the Chapter. In fact, it's an unfocused time for most of us, having to prepare this or that report, or review this or that policy, etc.

Oh well. You too underwent some distraction in your own communities as you elected new leadership and together began a new triennium. I trust this time of transition has gone smoothly for all of you and that all of us together can now begin to walk or stride or limp forward, however the case may be, with confidence in Him who has called into this wonderful family of Carmel.



PC Channel—Questions about Statutes, Part 3

Compiled by Claire Bloodgood, OCDS, on behalf of the Provincial Council, July 2017

External Signs of Membership

Why would members have to have permission to wear the large ceremonial scapular outside of Carmelite activities?

Members have always needed permission to wear the large scapular at public events outside the Order. The change in the statutes is that now the whole Council gives permission, rather than only one member of the Council.

Here is the updated policy explaining use of the large scapular. It is also posted on the provincial website. <http://www.thereocds.org/policy/provincial-policy/>

Provincial policy for public use of the large ceremonial scapular is:

2016 Statutes section VI.3:

“In addition to regular OCDS meetings, the ceremonial scapular may be worn when participating as a group at gatherings and events approved by the local Council. The ceremonial scapular is not worn publicly by OCDS members at other times, nor in an individual capacity.”

- Normally, these “gatherings and events” would be Church-sponsored functions and liturgical celebrations that the Carmelite community has been invited to participate in.
- “Participating as a group” means that the community has been invited *as a community*, and as many members attend as are able.
- “Participating as a group” may also mean that the local Council is sending a number of members to represent the OCDS Community.

Other considerations

The local Council has the authority to allow/request the members to wear the large scapular to an event where the Council believes a visible OCDS presence would be appropriate and useful.

The Council should seriously consider what their purpose is in having the members wear the large scapular publicly.

Examples:

- Wearing the large scapular at a parish Mass should be limited to attending as a community on a Carmelite feast day or regular meeting day.
- It is expected that members will wear the large scapular to the wake and funeral or memorial Mass of a deceased member.
- It is common to wear the scapular to the community Christmas gathering, if this is held during the time of the regular monthly meeting. Or if it is a celebration shared with other communities, which makes it an “OCDS event.”
- It is not usual to wear the scapular to a Mass offered for the community's deceased members, unless the members intend to sit together.
- It is not usual to wear the scapular at “fellowship” activities, especially if attendance is not required. (movie nights, picnics, potlucks, outings)

Members may not simply decide on their own to wear the large scapular, whether attending an event together or as an individual. This would be against the Promise of obedience.

The only exception to an individual OCDS not wearing the large scapular in public is if the superiors (local or provincial) have been asked to send a member to **represent the community, the province, or the Order** at a function, and the superiors have asked the member to wear the scapular as a sign of his/her OCDS identity.

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PC Channel—Questions about Statutes, Part 3

Compiled by Claire Bloodgood, OCDS, on behalf of the Provincial Council, July 2017

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More questions about the statutes

Community Life

- Is there still a requirement that communities have an attendance policy?

Yes, that requirement is spelled out in a policy which is currently posted on the provincial website. The policy has been updated recently, so please take a look.

- What happened to inactive status? What do we do about members who just leave and never come back? What about a member who is so sick they can't contact us and we can't find out where they were moved to?

This topic has always been a challenge. Let's break it down a little:

"Inactive" was a way for Councils to make their community roster reflect the actual state of the community. If a member had abandoned his community, he could be removed from the roster and his record moved to the community archives. It was used a lot when there was no clear way to dismiss a member for non-attendance.

If a member simply stops showing up, the Council is expected to talk with him about it and see what is needed [Statutes sec.VIII.3 and sec.IX.4.].

If a member has moved and dropped contact, it is hoped that the Council would reach out. More than likely the member's cell phone number and email have not changed. If that doesn't work, the Council might write to the member's old address and let the Post Office forward the letter. The options are to transfer to a closer community or become an Isolate [Statutes sec.VIII.6, XVII and XVIII].

Isolates are expected to be in regular contact with their community. There is no provision for "free floating" OCDS members without accountability to the Order.

If an infirm member has been moved by the family without telling the community about it, and the Council cannot find out anything, the member can be removed from the roster and the permanent record updated and archived.

This brings up the topic of caring for infirm members:

Ideally, the community designates a member (or even a team) to serve as "Infirmarian." One of the Infirmarian's duties is to keep in touch with infirmed members and report to the Council. As a member becomes more incapacitated, the Infirmarian would normally keep in some sort of contact with the infirm member's family.

Some communities plan ahead by having emergency contact numbers for their members.

It is a good idea for members to give instructions to a designated family member on what to do if they become incapacitated. This would include contact information for the President of the community and instructions to call them.

- If a person needs to be an isolate, *Who* does the assigning of an isolate to *Which* community. How is this decided?

Normally it is decided by the local Council, based on difficulty due to distance, [Statutes VIII.6]. If needed (such as a person from another province or from a disbanded community), the Provincial Delegate or Provincial Council may help a member to connect with a community as an isolate.

[Look for more questions about the Community Life section next time.]

PC Channel—PC Financial Statement

OCDS Province of St. Therese Provincial Council Financial Report

January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

Balance as of January 1, 2016		<u>\$7,711.17</u>
Income:		
Deposits		\$40,371.68
Total Income:		<u>\$40,371.68</u>
Expenses:		
Rome OCDS office	\$5,000.00	
Central Office salary	<u>\$1,249.50</u>	\$6,249.50
Provincial Council Expenses:		
Congress Expenses	\$6,179.42	
Annual PC mtg	\$295.70	
Visitation expenses	\$5,371.11	
Central Office expenses	\$56.65	
PC website charges	\$191.75	
2017 Congress seed money	<u>\$7,000.00</u>	\$19,094.63
Total Expenses		<u>\$25,344.13</u>
Ending balance as of December 31, 2016		<u>\$22,738.72</u>

PC Channel—Plenary Council Reminder

Hello Carmelites,

Here's an excerpt from a letter sent May 2017 to your local Councils.

As you know, we are required to have a meeting of the Plenary Council every three years. This triennium, the **Plenary Council meeting** will be held on **Friday, November 3 at 5:30pm** during the OCDS Congress in San Antonio, Texas. Dinner will be provided.

Per our OCDS Statutes section XXI.2: "Each community shall send two members: The President and an elected representative. If the President is unable to attend, another council member may be substituted. Each Study Group shall send one representative."

An "elected representative" means someone chosen by the community specifically to represent them at the Plenary Council meeting, not necessarily a council member. This is an expense that the communities are expected to plan for in their three-year budget.

The Plenary Council meeting is the time to bring issues to the attention of the entire province. It is also a wonderful opportunity to connect with other communities and discuss common concerns. Please make every effort to participate.

In preparation for the meeting, we need to hear from each community and Study Group:

Names and email addresses of your representatives.

Proposed agenda items: concerns, questions, requests to be discussed during the meeting.

While we did not give a deadline, we urge you to not waste any time. If you haven't already done so, please elect a representative at your very next community meeting.

There are still spaces left, but fewer each day. The hotel is beginning to contact nearby hotels about accommodating the overflow.

<http://www.2017ocdscongress.com/registration/>

Your community should pay the person's expenses (or at least part of them) from funds that have been set aside for that purpose.

Congress Tidings of Love



It is difficult to believe that our 2017 Congress is upon us, with scarcely 4 months to go! My heart overflows with great love and respect for each one participating on the Congress Planning Team and co teams; those communities and individuals who made donations; and for each one who has kept the success of Congress in their prayers. The new 'collaborative planning model' used for this Congress was an experience to behold—having the opportunity to meet and work with so many members and communities. I praise God for His Grace upon our Province! This journey to Congress has given witness to many miracles, a few holy tears and most importantly has fostered lifelong friendships in Carmel.

Each of us on the planning team has been richly blessed by opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit as He poured forth His Light and Love over the past 20 months...HIS WILL BE DONE.

Here are a few last pieces of information for you:

- ✦ To date, eight communities have RSVP'd to bring their community banners to Congress. There will be two wonderful opportunities for your community to participate in a banner procession (at Congress Opening Ceremony and at the Mass at the Basilica.) As long as your banner has a dowel-type rod along the top and a string/rope to hang the banner – we will provide the banner pole and stand.
- ✦ Early Registration ended June 30th and Standard Registration began July 1st (at a fee of \$325) through September 30th or until we have reached the 400th registration limit – whichever comes first. We are very close to having a full house.
- ✦ Volunteers are needed to participate as Leader, Cantor I, Cantor II and Reader for LOTH Morning Prayer on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- ✦ In the near future, we plan to post photographs of some of the Congress raffle and silent auction items. Keep an eye on the Congress website 2017ocdscongress.com
- ✦ July 31st is the deadline to submit a sponsored ad in the Congress program. This is a perfect opportunity to place a special message of congratulations; in memoriam of a loved one; to honor our friars, community spiritual assistant or council; in thanksgiving for a special intention or a business advertisement. The prices run from \$25 (one line) to \$150 (half page). Contact your President for more information.
- ✦ We are close to reaching our maximum hotel guest room limit at the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade. Currently we are negotiating additional guest room space with another hotel in close walking distance. Contact me if you are unable to make a reservation at the Omni.

Dear sisters and brothers in Carmel, please continue to pray for our Congress and for all who will be attending. Feel free to contact me regarding any of the above information.

Kathy Rasmussen, Congress Coordinator
ocdsprojectplan2017@gmail.com

"Put love where there is no love, so we may find love in the Church, in our families and in the world!"

OCDS Spiritual Corner—In Between Heaven and Earth

by Cynthia Morales, OCDS of Triumph of the Cross Community, Georgetown, Texas

Like most of us, I live a hectic life. Between work, commitments, responsibility as a parent, responsibilities to my parents, graduate studies, and snatches of all-too-brief enjoyment of interests and hobbies, life often seems a whirlwind.

And then something happens to make it all fall away, for my life to be unmasked for what it truly is--and is not.

I sit in a darkened room with my mother as she stares at the ceiling, eyes open but unseeing, and I watch the blinking numbers on the monitor charting her breathing rate, her heart rate, her blood pressure, her oxygen level. And nothing else matters. It is as if I believe that watching the numbers that show she is alive will somehow keep her alive. Like all I can do to help is to watch those numbers.

There is no time anymore. There is no job. There are no responsibilities, nothing I must do, no one I need talk to. My whole life now is just looking at those numbers, making sure she is still breathing, her heart still beating. Like Moses holding up his arms—as if by looking at the numbers, I can keep her alive.

And as she lingers there in that no-man's land, neither with us, nor away from us, I realize that I am there as well. I am with her in this limbo, this place between Heaven and Earth.

There is nowhere to hide in this place. On Earth, we hide behind our roles, our responsibilities, all that we must do, and all that we must be. And it masks who we really are, who God wants us to really be, and the hard truth of whether we are that person—or even trying to be that person. On Earth, all activity looks like action, like progress. But here, where all is still, all is silent, the truth is revealed.

And I realize that I need this. That it is a blessing to be here. That as much as it hurts, I can never go to God without it. That I have to keep living here even when time starts again, when I leave this room and reenter the world of my job, my responsibilities, my “life.” Because God is here.



OCDS Spiritual Corner—The Art of Accompaniment

by John T. Stevens, OCDS

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. (Mt 10:29)

God is present not only in the tree and in the sparrow and in the ground; He is present with the sparrow as it falls from the tree to the ground. The omnipresence of God is a loving presence which accompanies each of His creatures through the details of its daily life. From His special creature—the human being—He looks also for a return of love, which begins with the acknowledgement of His own loving accompaniment.

Pope Francis has asked us to practice the art of accompaniment in *Evangelii Gaudium*, paragraphs 169-174. This art of accompaniment makes “present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze.” It is not an exact science. It is not set of ready answers. A listening heart finds “the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders.” We want to make God’s love known and convince the sinner and the unbeliever that they are “pilgrims,” rather than “drifters.”

Surely the disciples on the way to Emmaus did not feel like pilgrims. All their hopes had been dashed, and they may have felt as worthless as two sparrows that are sold for a small coin. Still, they accompanied one another down the road. Jesus came to meet them. He understood their distress and first listened to their doubt and pain. Then He catechized them from the scriptures, and they asked Him to remain.

I also must ask Jesus to remain, and I must remain in Him, especially through the practice of staying recollected to the best of my ability. It does no good to accompany someone else if I have departed from God’s company. I cannot convince someone that he or she is not a drifter if I am drifting myself.

If, however, I am accustomed to acknowledging the presence of Jesus in my daily life, I will be prepared to acknowledge Him before others (Mt 10:32). This will come naturally to me even if it comes at the cost of disapproval, antagonism and opposition.

Despite whatever opposition I may encounter, my witness must be one of love which accompanies the other, just as I have been accompanied in my often wayward journey by the loving God. Do I imitate the Heavenly Father when I witness to His Son? Or do I do it my way? Am I unwilling to listen to the objections of others? Am I afraid to hear their doubts and pains? Do I believe I have done enough if I tell them the truth and leave them to their own devices? Do I sit in the tree and shout to the tumbling sparrow, “See! I told you so?”

It is not enough to witness to Jesus. I must witness to the truth as He would, with gentleness and compassion. I must walk with Jesus more closely and talk with him more honestly about my own doubts and pains. Then I will find the “right gesture and word” to express God’s loving presence and to bring others closer to God.

LITANY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of Heaven,
Have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost,
Have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, One God,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,
pray for us sinners.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Queen of Heaven,
pray for us sinners.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, vanquisher of Satan, etc.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, most dutiful Daughter,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, most pure Virgin,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, most devoted Spouse,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, most tender Mother,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, perfect model of virtue,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, sure anchor of hope,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, refuge in affliction,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, dispenser of God's gifts,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, tower of strength against our foes,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our aid in danger,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, road leading to Jesus,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our light in darkness,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our consolation at the hour of death,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, advocate of the most abandoned sinners,

For those hardened in vice,
With confidence we come to thee,
O Lady of Mount Carmel.
For those who grieve thy Son,
With confidence we come to thee,
O Lady of Mount Carmel.
For those who neglect to pray, etc.
For those who are in their agony,
For those who delay their conversion,
For those suffering in Purgatory,
For those who know thee not,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Hope of the Despairing,
R. Intercede for us with thy Divine Son.

Let Us Pray.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, glorious Queen of Angels, channel of God's tenderest mercy to man, refuge and advocate of sinners, with confidence I prostrate myself before thee, beseeching thee to obtain for me **[mention request]**. In return I solemnly promise to have recourse to thee in all my trials, sufferings and temptations, and I shall do all in my power to induce others to love and reverence thee and to invoke thee in all their needs. I thank thee for the numberless blessings which I have received from thy mercy and powerful intercession. Continue to be my shield in danger, my guide in life, and my consolation at the hour of death. Amen.



New Cardinal in the Teresian Carmel

On the 21st of May last, during the message which accompanies the recital of the *Regina Coeli* in St Peter's square, Pope Francis announced the celebration of a Consistory on the 28th of June for the appointment of five new Cardinals, among whom was Mons. Lars Anders Arborelius, OCD, who since 1998 has been the Bishop of Stockholm.

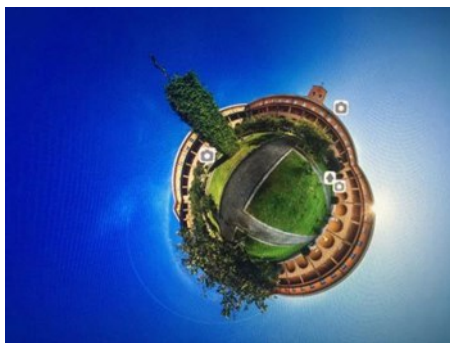
Monsignor Arborelius was born in Sorengo, Switzerland, on the 24th September 1949, into the heart of a non-practicing Lutheran family. When his parents were divorced, he went with his mother to Lund, in Sweden, where he acquired the nationality of that country.

When he was converted to Catholicism at the age of 20, the writings of St Therese of the Child Jesus moved him to enter our Order, in the Flanders Province. He did his studies in Bruges, (Belgium) and in the Teresianum in Rome. He was appointed Bishop in 1998 by St John Paul II, and was ordained Bishop that same year.

From the coming 29th June, the day on which he will become Cardinal, he will be changed into a counselor close to Pope Francis, called to uphold the Pope's service as Bishop of Rome and universal Pastor of the Church, as well as being called himself to serve the ecclesial communion and be a joyful herald of the Gospel, as Pope Francis reminded us in his message.



A virtual visit to the Teresianum



From the 5th of April last, the *Teresianum* Pontifical Theological Faculty and the Pontifical Institute of Spirituality in Rome has become more accessible, thanks to the possibility of making a virtual visit, which gives an opportunity of getting to know its more important facilities.

The 360 degree *tour* begins with a visit to the central cloister, which you can move around by means of the directional arrows which can be found at the bottom of the computer screen or, on mobile devices, simply by rotating the screen or moving it with the finger. As they move around, visitors will find a series of pulsating camera shaped icons which, when pressed, will make it possible to see the entrance to the Teresianum, the crypt and classrooms, and the secretarial office.

One icon with an arrow enables you to make a virtual visit to the chapel and move about in it with a 360 degree vision. From the heights of the organ pipes, visitors can again press another arrow which will take them to the library, where some of the more significant items in its collection can be seen. Another icon on the door of the chapel will take you on a visit to the Aula Magna – the Great Hall.

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The work was done so unselfishly by the photographer José Ángel Barbero and by Juan Borrego Alonso, from the leading company in technology and communication services for the Church, *COMUNICA+*, from Salamanca, Spain (www.comunicamas.com).

The website for the virtual visit is this: <http://www.fotografiaspanoramicas.com/teresianum/>

An international Congress on St. John of the Cross in CITEs

With the ending of the cycle of Teresian Congresses (2010- 2015) and the Congress on Mercy (2016) which has taken place, the University of Mysticism is undertaking a new project for the diffusion of the spirituality of St. Teresa and St. John by organising a cycle of Congresses dedicated to each of the works of St. John of the Cross.

The cycle of congresses will open with the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (4th-10th September 2017). Doctrinally, this book develops a profound vision of man's path of freedom and of his progressive drawing closer to God, who transforms him. It is a process in which God makes himself known to man, at the same time that a change takes place in man leading from the senses to the spirit. St. John of the Cross wrote this work for the many

souls to whom God gives the talent and grace to advance far along the path of union and who get lost because they do not know how to respond to this grace or who have no-one to direct them. A detailed programme of the content and guest speakers will later be made available.



Father Saverio meets with the nuns of the United States of America



Father General met with 162 Disalced Carmelite nuns from monasteries in the United States from April 25th to 29th in St. Louis (Missouri). The meeting can be regarded as historic, and its organization was aided by some OCDS members.

Father Saverio gave the sisters two conferences based on the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere*. They were titled, “Contemplative life and cloister” and “Contemplative life and the Word of God.”

Father General described the life of the contemplative Carmelites as a life of “seekers of the ways of the Spirit,” who do not limit themselves to welcoming the guest as industrious housewives – in the style of Martha – to the point of forgetting him and neglecting their relationship with him.

In his second conference, Father General insisted upon the need to establish a profound relationship with the Word of God, essential to the contemplative life.

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The sisters had the opportunity for group reflection on the proposed topics in Father Saverio's conferences, and he also had the opportunity to meet with the councils of the different federations.

Accompanying Father General from Rome were Father Daniel Chowning, Definitor, and Father Rafal Wilkowski, his personal secretary and the one responsible for the secretariat of the nuns.

Father Michael Berry of the Province of California-Arizona and Father Jude Peters, Provincial of Washington, also participated in the meeting.

A detailed record of the meeting in English with photographs may be found at this link:

<http://ocdnunsnationalmtg.blogspot.com.au/>

Meeting of the Theology Students of Indian Provinces

As customary, also this year 46 students of theology belonging to 7 Indian provinces met at Gandarvakottai Spirituality Centre, in the province of Tamilnadu for a week.

The primary intention of this gathering is to know each other and grow in fraternity. This is one of the initiatives taken by the Inter Provincial Council of India.

The Definitor for South Asia Fr. Johannes was present at this meeting. He addressed the students and celebrated the concluding Eucharist on 22nd April.

Added to this, they organize every year two months of second novitiate (for those preparing to make the Solemn Profession). They study about the charism and our holy parents during these special gatherings.



Monsignor Amancio Escapa ocd completes his earthly life.

On the 5th of May this year, there died in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, Monsignor Amancio Escapa Aparicio, titular Bishop of Cene and the emeritus auxiliary Bishop of the archdiocese of Santo Domingo.



Monsignor Amancio was born in Cistierna, León, Spain on the 30th March 1938 and made his profession as a Discalced Carmelite in Segovia, in the old Province of Castile, on the 2nd of August 1954, together with his twin brother José Marie, who died some years ago. They took as their religious names Amancio de María and Amando de Jesús, respectively.

Monsignor Amancio was ordained priest on 22nd of April, 1962, and on the 31st of May 1996, he was appointed the titular Bishop of Cene and the Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Santo Domingo as well as the Vicar General of the Archdiocese. His ordination as bishop took place on the 6th of July 1996.

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He never dissociated himself from the Order despite his episcopal appointment and, with the agreement of the Superiors, made the community of St Jude Thaddeus in the capital his place of residence.

He ordained many Carmelite friars of the Commissariat of the Caribbean as deacons and priests and on his visits to Spain took active part in the solemn celebrations in our churches, such as the solemnity of Our Lady of Mt Carmel and other feast days.

From 1965 he had been living in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in the community of the St Jude Thaddeus College, where he was many times the Superior and Pastor. He also took on many pastoral duties in the Archdiocese and eventually was appointed Vicar General on the 17th December 1982. Of note was his assistance as a counselor during the years of the “Cursillos of Christianity”. He died at 79 years of age as the result of grave lung cancer.

Masses for his eternal repose were celebrated in the cathedral, the seat of the “Cursillos of Christianity” movement and in the Discalced Carmelite parish of St Jude Thaddeus. He was buried beside his brother in the “Gate of Heaven” cemetery of the Dominican capital.

May he rest in peace and let us give thanks to God for the intense and fruitful ministry of Monsignor Amancio.

24th Portugal OCDS meeting. Fátima, 28th to 30th April 2017 **Secular Carmel vocational discernment**



In Fatima’s *Domus Carmeli* was celebrated the twenty-fourth annual national meeting of the Portuguese OCDS with some 80 to 90 taking part from the various communities in Portugal, including the Isle of Madeira. Present was Fr. Alzinar Debastiani, Fr General’s Delegate for the Secular Carmelite Order and Affiliated Institutes.

Some 16 communities exist in the Province, with around 600 members, the majority of whom reside in Madeira (400 members).

Among the more important conclusions of the congress we can point out the following: that the laity have a greater role in the fraternities and in coming meetings; that the fraternities deepen in the theology of the laity as set out in the second Vatican Council and has been developed since; that there is a greater turnover in the positions of the different communities; that the communities of Madeira be updated and renewed in accordance with the provisions of the present Constitutions of the Secular Order. To achieve this aim, Fr Alpoim Alves was appointed specific delegate for the region to help Fr Joaquim Teixeira, the Provincial Delegate, in his duties.

In addition to discussions, there was time to meet the friars and the sisters of the Fatima monastery. All those taking part made a pilgrimage along the Hungarian *Via Sacra*, assisted by Marian texts and from the writings of the saints of Carmel. During these days, 3 members of the Paço d’Arco community in Lisbon

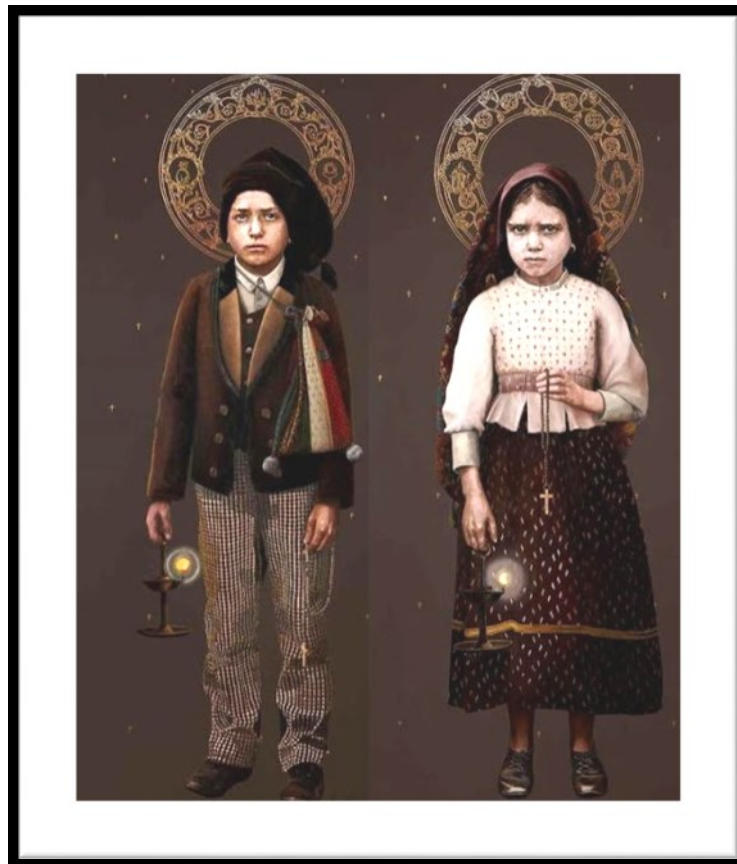
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made their temporary promises, as well as 4 lay people from the Fatima community taking part in the ceremony for entering the novitiate.

The closing Eucharist, which took place in the chapel of the monastery of the Carmelite nuns, was a beautiful experience of communion between the three branches of the Discalced Carmelite Order. The chapel is dedicated to Jacinta and Francisco, the young shepherds of Fatima, who were proclaimed saints by Pope Francis on the 13th of May this year, the day which marked the centenary of the apparitions.



Official Canonization Photo from the Vatican
Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto
May 13, 2017

Carmelite House of Prayer, Oakville

39th Annual Benefit Dinner

Sunday, September 10, 2017



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39th Annual Benefit Dinner

Discalced Carmelite Friars

Carmelite House of Prayer, Oakville

Sunday, September 10, 2017

Enjoy the beautiful grounds of the Monastery

Dinner and Auction

Benefit Schedule

2:00 p.m.

Social Hour and Entertainment

Silent Auction, Raffles, Door Prizes

4:00 p.m.

Buffet Style Dinner

BBQ Tri-tip and Chicken

Side Dishes and Wine Cakes

Fine Napa Valley Wines

Live Auction

Individual Ticket : \$50.00

(\$60.00 if paid at Door)

RSVP by September 1st, 2017

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News from around the World—Oakville Benefit Dinner

(Continued from page 23)

Our House of Prayer in Oakville provides a perfect setting for slowing down and simply being alone with one's thoughts. It is a sanctuary, a place apart, where people can get in touch with themselves and God.

The Discalced Carmelite priests and brothers of Oakville and the Friends of the Carmelites invite you to join us by participating in our 39th Annual Benefit Barbeque, held on the beautiful grounds of the Carmelite House of Prayer in Oakville.

The Barbeque is our primary fundraiser each year. It helps in a big way to enable the Carmelite priests and brothers to continue their life and ministry in the Napa Valley.

Recently the Discalced Carmelites of the western United States affirmed their desire to remain on this "holy ground" and to renew the buildings and grounds, the ministry, and the community of priests and brothers here.

With a view to achieving this, a number of changes in personnel will take place in the next few months. Fr. Mark Kissner will become the new superior, or prior. Fr. James Zakowicz will become the project manager for the work of repair and retrofit, remodeling and new construction, and also fundraising, that summons us into the future. Fr. Matthew Williams and (in January 2018) Fr. Christopher La Rocca will join them.

Moving on to new assignments in the Province will be Fr. Gerald Werner, Fr. David Costello, and Bro. Mark Moran. Fr. Mark Kristy and Bro. Roger Larre will remain to help provide continuity between the old and the new. Please pray for them all.

We keep all of you in our Masses and prayers. We are ever grateful for your support and believe that God will reward you as God alone can and as we ourselves cannot.

We wish you a truly blessed summertime.

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My house shall be a house of prayer, says the Lord:
in that house, everyone who asks receives,
and the one who seeks finds,
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

(from the Roman Missal)

Discalced Carmelite Fathers
Carmelite House of Prayer
P.O. Box 347, Oakville, CA 94562
Phone 707-944-2454
e-mail: ocdoakville@gmail.com
website: OakvilleCarmelites.org

News from around the Province

The Triumph of the Cross Community of Georgetown, Texas welcomed Fr. Jerome Earley as retreat master on April 8, 2017. Father spoke on St. John of the Cross: Discerning or Recognizing His Communications to Us. Father said we should learn to quiet the soul to hear the movement of God within us, and to recognize our own nothingness before God. We are to be a Christ-like people in order to find God in our sufferings and to be faithful in prayer. We must also allow ourselves to be purified, and to be open to the Holy Spirit. After Father's talk, he gave us his blessing and also blessed our ceremonial scapulars. We thank Father Jerome for spending the day with us and we look forward to his next visit to our community.

Father Jerome Earley, O.C.D.

Triumph of the Cross Community



News from around the Province

Joint Annual Retreat for Mary, Queen of Carmel in Conyers and St. Therese, the Little Flower Study Group in Lawrenceville on the week-end of June 2-4, 2017 at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit. Msgr. Terry Young, OCDS (Doctors of Divine Love, Atlanta) was the Retreat Director and the theme was St. Elizabeth of the Trinity.



News from around the Province

Retreat and Rituals

The St. Elizabeth of the Trinity OCDS community in Tulsa, OK, had a special and blessed day on June 17, 2017. The day started with a retreat wherein the community read and discussed St. Teresa of Avila's letters to her brother and nephew, Lorenzo, looking for that which would be most helpful to us in living our OCDS vocation. The community's Spiritual Assistant, Msgr. Gregory Gier, was able to join them and celebrate Mass and rituals. Three people were Clothed and admitted to formation. Seven members made their First Promise. Additionally, the community had a reception and congratulated Msgr. Gier on his recent 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Deo gratias!



Pat Biddick, Toni Wersal, Roseanne Bell, Msgr. Gier, Beth Henry,
Sue Madden, Laurie Haskins, Deanna Todd



Manuel Calvin, Angie Patrick, Msgr. Gier, Angelina Dunn

News from around the Province

Installation of Officers and Clothing Ceremony

On June 11, 2017 the Baton Rouge Community of St. John of the Cross and St. Anthony had their Ceremony for the Installation of Officers. The Ceremony was officiated by Fr. Nutan Minj who also prayed a blessing over the entire community.

From left:

Fr Nutan Minj, Ethlyn White, President; Dana Barton, Director of Formation; Mary Rolfs, Council Member; Earl Pitre, Council Member; Joan Pitre, Secretary; Clara Gillespie, Treasurer. Not pictured Clarence Landry, Council Member



Also on that day, we had a Ceremony of Clothing. Adine Moore and Susan Fonte received the Ceremonial Scapular from Fr. Minj and Dana Barton, Director of Formation.



From left: Adine Moore, Fr Nutan Minj, and Susan Fonte

News from around the Province

Clothing Ceremony—Community of Mary, Mother of Grace

On June 25, 2017 the Community of Mary, Mother of Grace, Lafayette, Louisiana accepted the petition from Jo Ellen Daspit to enter formation in the community.

Jo Ellen received the scapular from Father Conley Bertrand, OCDS, Spiritual Assistant, in the Clothing Ceremony held during Evening Prayer.



Father Conley Bertrand, OCDS is enrolling Jo Ellen Daspit with the Scapular of the Carmelite Order.

Assisting Father Bertrand is Vicki Guibeau, Formation Director

Congratulations to Jo Ellen Daspit

Left to Right:

Jo Ellen Daspit, Candidate

Goldie LeBlanc, Aspirant Facilitator





October 07, 1936- June 29, 2017

Elizabeth Marie “Betty” Melcher Keller, OCDS

San Antonio, Texas – *submitted by Patty Babcock, OCDS*

Elizabeth Marie “Betty” Melcher Keller O.C.D.S, of San Antonio, Texas passed away June 29, 2017 at the age of 80 years. She was surrounded by her family and friends.

Betty and her deceased husband Marion were both members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Therese of San Antonio, Texas. Betty was clothed in 1980, she made her first promise 1983, and her definitive promise in 1986. In 2012, she took a pilgrimage to Mt. Carmel where she made her solemn vows.

She is survived by her three children, 10 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Betty retired after 19 years of teaching and served as a principal for 14 years. She played the organ for her parish where she was a member of Our Lady of Grace Church in La Coste, TX.

Betty was an accomplished musician and played the organ for her Carmelite community at the Basilica of Little Flower in San Antonio Texas.

She was a true blessing to our community, always ready and willing to serve in whatever capacity was needed. Betty will be sincerely missed by us all.

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 Jeannine Meaux at jtmeaux@cox.net

Parting Words

“One should consider the virtues and who it is who serves our Lord with greater mortification, humility, and purity of conscience; this is the one who will be the holiest. Yet, little can be known here below with certitude; we must wait until the true Judge gives to each one what is merited. In heaven we will be surprised to see how different his judgment is from what we can understand here below. May he be forever praised, amen.”

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www.icspublications.org.

Getting the *Flos Carmeli* to members

Community presidents, please remember that the Province no longer mails out copies of the Flos Carmeli to communities. It is the community's responsibility to get a copy to each of your members, either via email or by print. This includes all isolate, aged, or infirm members. Thank you!

Provincial Council for the 2017-2020 Triennium:

Claire Bloodgood, Georgetown, TX—President

Jo Ann Murphy, Austin, TX

John Stevens, McAllen, TX

Anna Peterson, San Antonio, TX

Mary Therese Bellman, Grand Prairie, TX