

Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Province
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Spring 2020

Volume XXX No. 1

From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Hello Carmelites,

Praised be Jesus Christ – now and forever.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

I am happy to have this opportunity to write to you on behalf of the new Provincial Council. We stand in solidarity with you and join together in prayer for the world during this challenging time.

We have certainly experienced a Lenten Season like no other. Our plans, our schedules, and our lists have been abandoned for a very different daily life, a different way of looking at things, a different idea of what is important or essential.

Outgoing Provincial Council

Join me in a heartfelt thanks to the outgoing members of the Provincial Council and the special gifts they shared with us during the last triennium --

- to Claire Bloodgood who provided strong leadership and tireless commitment to the mission of the Council.
- to Jo Ann Murphy who supported the use of technology as a tool to enhance the work of the council and our communities and generously shared her insight and ideas for continuous improvement.
- to John Stevens who worked diligently to organize and enhance the quality of the Flos each quarter.

New Council

The outgoing and the incoming members of the Provincial Council (PC) gathered for three days in late January in San Antonio for orientation and for initial planning. We meet once a month via conference call. Barbara Basgall (Oklahoma City), Mark Calvert (Knoxville), Maxine Latiolais (New Iberia), Jill Parks (Savannah), and I (San Antonio) have contacted Presidents whose communities we will visit during the next three years and for whom we are the “point of contact” for questions regarding their communities.

Triennial Plenary Council Meeting

A Leadership Workshop and the Triennial Plenary Council Meeting is scheduled for September 18-20, 2020. The Plenary Council meeting will be held during the workshop. Every community must send the President and a



Inside this issue:

From the President's Desk	1-2
Report From the Provincial Father Stephen Sanchez, OCD	3
2020-2023 Oklahoma Provincial Council	4
2019 Provincial Financial Report	5
Submission for the Flos Carmeli	6
News from around the Province—2021 OCDS Congress	7-9
News from around the Province —Georgetown, TX	10
News from around the Province —New Orleans & Covington, LA	11
Poetry Father Bonaventure Sauer, OCD	12
Book Review—In Context	13

(Continued on page 2)

From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Inside this issue: (Cont)

Report from the Superior General 14-17

OCDS Obituaries 18-19

Prayer to St. Therese during COVID-19 Pandemic 20

Prayer to Mary during COVID-19 Pandemic 21

Parting Words 22

†
Memorare

Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that
anyone who fled to thy
protection, implored thy help, or
sought thine intercession was
left unaided.



Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of
virgins, my mother; to thee do I
come, before thee I stand, sinful
and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word
Incarnate, despise not my
petitions, but in thy mercy hear
and answer me. Amen.

(Continued from page 1)

member-at-large elected by the community to the plenary meeting. An information letter and Registration form will be mailed June 1.

Local Council Elections

Any local community that cannot meet the 2020 OCDS Triennial Election deadline due to the COVID-19 is asked to request for a dispensation from the deadline (May 16, 2020). That request should be sent to Kathy Rasmussen, COA at thereseocdscoa@gmail.com. The elections should be held as soon as community meetings are able to resume.

There are some excellent articles on the provincial website that address how an effective local Council functions: <http://www.thereseocds.org/best-practices-2/councils-and-developing-leadership/>

March 28, 2020 from Superior General

Please read the letter from Father Cannistra to the OCDS. It appears in this issue (Page 14-17) and calls for careful attention. I would recommend reading it aloud and discussing it at a community meeting in a large or small group setting. Highlights - appreciation for the development and history of OCDS legislation, individual and community responsibility for knowledge and understanding of OCDS legislation, and clarification on the apostolate of the Order.

Someone dear texted me several weeks ago saying, “the world needs your prayers.” Indeed, the world needs our prayers and the world needs Carmel.

In the March 28 letter, Father Cannistra writes “. . . the experience of the charism of the Teresian Carmel for the OCDS should be realized first of all in the family environment, work, and other commitments in the midst of the world. It is there that the witness of the living God, who desires to maintain a relationship of friendship with every human being created in His image and likeness should take place and bear witness.”

May the Lord Jesus bless you with His peace.

In Carmel,
Anna Peterson, OCDS
**President, Provincial Council
for the OCDS Oklahoma Province**

Council Members:

Barbara Basgall, OCDS, Mark Calvert, OCDS, Maxine Latiolais, OCDS and Jillison Parks, OCDS

Report from the Provincial

By Father Stephen Sanchez, OCD

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Carmel,

As we experience, in a very unexpected way, St. Paul's statement: "for the present form of the world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31), the reality of the Church continues on its journey through this passing world with its eyes and heart set on the Father's House to which we belong.

As a community of faith, as a community of Discalced Carmelites, the 'temporality' of this world should not come to be a 'preoccupation' but a reality that is accepted as part of the landscape through which we journey. The community must continue its journey, not averting its eyes or concern for the present moment; but, as it ministers to the present moment, know and understand that there is a 'greater moment' to which all these moments point. This caravan of 'pilgrims,' called to care for and tend to the world, must also continue its own journey and reevaluate its own structure and manner of 'going forth,' both into the world and unto the Father's House.

As you know, we as a Province have undertaken the difficult process of restructuring ourselves. The term 'restructure' is a bit misleading because it is really a process of re-examining our way of living our religious charism and asking ourselves if the structures in place actually support and vivify our religious life as Discalced Carmelites. In the Church, starting with the Council of Jerusalem, there has been and always will be a segment that shouts 'but we've never done it that way before!' or its equivalent 'but we've always done it this way!' To those, the idea of the Spirit inviting us and challenging us to reexamine ourselves is more than threatening. However, the Spirit does challenge, and we trust that the challenge leads to a deeper life in the Spirit.

We friars, as a motley group of ragged pilgrims – some joyful and excited about the journey, others weary and cautious – are in this process of discerning what is most supportive and life-giving to our life as religious men within the Order of Discalced Carmelites. We are a group of disciples in this particular culture, within this particular region and with our particular history. We continue to weigh our many responsibilities, our ministries, our families (Nuns and OCDS) and our own mortality and ability to meet the demands of all of the present realities in which each of our communities finds itself. We have been able to agree that we need to strengthen our own communities so as to be able to better live our lives as religious and, thus, better serve those whom the Lord has called us to minister to within the Church.

The concrete decisions of how and when are still in process. That will be part of the discussions at our Provincial Chapter this coming summer. All this will now come under the leadership of our new Provincial-Elect, Fr. Luis Joaquin Castañeda, OCD, who will take office the first day of our Chapter. Please pray for him and for all of us as we seek to do the Lord's Will and remain faithful to the Charism our Holy Parents have entrusted to us.

In Him,

Fr. Stephen

2020-2023 Oklahoma Provincial Council

On the weekend of January 24-26, 2020, the Oklahoma Provincial Council held



their transition meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Installed were three new members.

CURRENT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Back Row – Mark Calvert and Jillison Parks

Front Row – Barbara Basgall, Maxine Latiolais, Anna Peterson (President),



and Kathy Rasmussen (Central Office Administrator)

Back Row: Mark Calvert, Barbara Basgall, Anna Peterson, John Stevens (outgoing)

Front Row: Claire Bloodgood (outgoing), Maxine Latiolais, Jillison Parks, Jo Ann Murphy (outgoing)

OCDS Province of St. Therese Provincial Council Financial Report - 2019

OCDS Province of St. Therese Provincial Council Financial Report - 2019

Balance as of January 1, 2019		<u>\$27,603.96</u>
Income:		
Visitation expenses paid by communities	\$3,500.00	
Provincial dues collected	\$38,412.50	
Other	\$36.00	
Total Income:		<u>\$41,948.50</u>
Expenses:		
Visitations	\$5,834.30	
2019 Provincial Delegate	\$5,000.00	
2018 Provincial Delegate	\$5,000.00	
Ontario CA, 2019 Congress	\$8,687.80	
Postage	\$227.44	
Office supplies	\$37.89	
COA pay	\$3,411.45	
PC website charges	\$0.00	
2019 OCDS General Secretariat Assessment	\$5,000.00	
2018 OCDS General Secretariat Assessment	\$5,000.00	
Carmelite Institute	\$500.00	
Misc. expenses	\$3,132.44	
Total Expenses:		<u>\$41,831.32</u>
Ending balance as of December 31, 2019		<u>\$27,721.14</u>

Note: The 2018 Assessments were delayed and paid in early 2019.

Submissions for the *Flos Carmeli*—

Submitted by Maxine Latiolais, OCDS, Provincial Councilor

REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

I am serving as the Provincial Council *Flos* Coordinator, and I am asking for submissions such as book reviews, personal reflections and testimonies. Please submit only articles that are well-crafted and focused on our Carmelite charism. Book reviews should be about books with Carmelite themes and/or authors and should be about a half page to a full page. A book which is relevant to our Carmelite charism could also be acceptable.

Since the *Flos Carmeli* is published quarterly, submission due dates for the articles occur four times per year:

- January 1
- April 1
- July 1
- October 1

The Provincial Council has created a separate email for *Flos Carmeli* submissions only, and I will be monitoring that email address. You may send them to flos.submit@gmail.com

Your servant in Carmel,
Maxine Latiolais, OCDS, Provincial Councilor

State of the Heart of the 2021 Congress

Theme: *Surrender to Him and Be Free to Love*

FLOS Spring 2020



**Registration Begins
October 2020!**

**Early Bird Registration starts:
Oct. 15th, 2020
Early Bird Registration Fee:
\$300**

**Start budgeting for the 2021
Congress today!**

The 2021 OCDS Congress will be held September 9-12, 2021 at the Omni Houston Hotel in Houston, Texas. In order to help you prepare for the cost of attending, we're posting the special room rates for you below.

Room Rates at Omni Houston:
\$135/night (Single/Double)
\$145/night (Triple)
\$155/night (Quad)

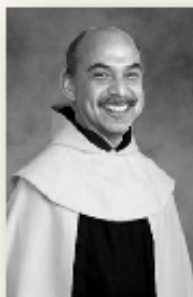
You can visit the hotel website here:
www.omnihotels.com/hotels/houston



**Secular Carmelites of
the Province of St.
Therese - Oklahoma**

Congress Speakers Announcement:

We are excited to share the following three confirmed speakers for the 2021 Congress!



Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD
Provincial
Oklahoma Province of St. Therese



Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD
Superior, Mt. Carmel Center
Oklahoma Province of St. Therese



Jane Thibault, OCDS
OCDS Washington Province
Learn more here:
contemplatingblog.com/jane-thibault/

News from around the Province—2021 OCDS Congress

Submitted by Laura Durant, Congress Coordinator

Surrender to Him & Be Free to Love

Spring 2020

2021 Congress Summer Fundraiser

It is with great excitement that we are announcing our first Province-wide fundraiser for the 2021 Congress! We are thrilled to be incorporating 4 beautiful stained-glass windows from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas, into 4 note cards (set of 12; 3 of each card). See the images below:



We want to thank the teams from the Basilica in San Antonio for their cooperation and support in the design and development of these note cards. We are truly appreciative!

This will be a unique opportunity to purchase note cards with images of our beloved Basilica in San Antonio and support the 2021 Congress at the same time! These note cards are perfect for all occasions, including for those making their Promises!

Presidents and Congress Liaisons will be notified via email with more details & how to order this summer.

Donations Appreciated

In an effort to keep registration fees as low as possible and to pay for the increasing costs of expenses necessary to put on the Congress, as well as cover costs for friars to attend, we are praying individuals and communities will help us, both with prayer and monetary gifts.

Because installment payments to the Congress venue begin in early 2021, we are asking those who feel called to support the Congress with monetary gifts to try to do so in 2020. Each donation, large or small, is needed and very much appreciated. The tiered donation structure is below:

Sponsor a Friar		\$750	
Wisdom	\$375	Understanding	\$275
Knowledge	\$175	Piety	\$75

Kindly make the check payable to: Discalced Carmelite Fathers of Oklahoma – OCDS 2021 Congress.

Please mail donations to: Patricia Balcock, 119 Grassmarket, San Antonio, Texas 78209

*In Carmel,
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel & St. Therese Community, San Antonio, Texas (2021 Community Fundraising Lead)*

2

News from around the Province—2021 OCDS Congress

Submitted by Laura Durant, Congress Coordinator

Surrender to Him & Be Free to Love

Spring 2021



2021 OCDS Congress: September 9-12, 2021

Grand Houston Hotel
4 Riverway, Houston, TX 77054
www.grandhotels.com/hotels/houston

Seeking Donations for the Congress Welcome Bag

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
We are in great need of items for the Congress Welcome Bags. We thank the communities who have already volunteered to donate items. In an effort to help generate ideas, the following are examples of items that would be helpful to have for the Welcome Bags:

*Saint drawings * Scapulars * Wrist rosaries *
Note pads * Prayer beads*

We will need about 420 of each item to fill the bags. *Please note we do not want heavy things that will weigh the bags down.* Gathering these items can be a group effort (from the same or multiple communities). A group of creative members can make something together or a group can work together to coordinate gathering the same item.

All donations will greatly be appreciated. May God reward you all for your help.

*Blessings,
Teresa DeMary, Welcome Bag Team Lead
Most Holy Trinity Community (Houston #4)*

**Contact Teresa DeMary to
donate items to the Congress
Welcome Bags:**

Teresa.demary@gmail.com

Please join me in thanking our Congress Planning Team for the generous gift of their time and talents!

Host Community, Venue Coordination, Marketing/Publicity, & Library Team B Lead – The Most Holy Trinity and St. Joseph (Houston #1)

Hospitality Team – San Juan de la Cruz (Houston #2)

Vendor Room & Venue Search Team ~ St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face Study Group (Houston #3)

Registration Welcome Bag Team – Most Holy Trinity (Houston #4)

Library Team A (St. Michael) – Infant Jesus of Prague (Dallas, TX) & St. Joseph and St. Theresa of Lisieux (Jackson, MS)

Adoration Room Team ~ The Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus (Oklahoma City)

Congress Prayer Team ~ St. Theresa of the Little Flower (Lawrenceville, GA)

Program Team – The Triumph of the Cross (Georgetown, TX)

Registration Team ~ St. Joseph (St. Louis, MO)

Souvenir Team A – St. Thomas Benedict of the Cross (Austin, TX)

Financial Accountability Lead ~ Kathy Rasmussen (Georgetown, TX)

Welcome Team Lead & Congress Co-Coordinator ~ Michelle Estep (Austin, TX)

Congress Prayer

Jesus, we surrender ourselves into Your Heart, so Your Love may shine through us and spread throughout all the world.

We give ourselves to You, abandoning ourselves into Your Loving embrace so that under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Holy Spirit fills us with the inspiration, dedication, devotion and grace needed to work together with Your Love in our hearts.

We entrust this Congress and all that will come – the joys, the difficulties, the obstacles and the blessings – to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. May she guide our every step, every word, and every action, so this Congress is blessed by her example of her perfect humility and surrender and all who prepare and attend this Congress are under her mantle of loving protection.

Jesus, give us the courage to surrender ourselves wholeheartedly to You, feasting answering Your call, holding tight to Your cross and embracing ours knowing it will lead us to union with You, which is our heart's deepest desire.

Questions, Comments? Contact:

Laura Durant & Michelle Estep (2021 Congress Co-Coordinator)
512-699-6921

OCDSCongressCoordinator2021@gmail.com

News from around the Province— News from Georgetown Community

Submitted by Marianne Gonzales, OCDS

The Triumph of the Cross Community celebrated clothings and professions on January 11, 2020. Aishu Dimayuga and Rosa Perez were received into formation and clothed with the Brown Scapular during Morning Prayer. A Mass followed at St. Helen Catholic Church in Georgetown celebrated by our Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD. During Mass, Jim Burns, Geri Lynn, and DeeAnn Smith made their First Promise, and Lilia Medina made her Definitive Promise in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. A reception followed in the St. Rita Activity Center.



Pictured above: Rosa Perez, Aishu Dimayuga, Geri Lynn, Fr. Bonaventure, DeeAnn Smith, Jim Burns, Lilia Medina

Afterwards, Father Bonaventure led a Day of Reflection with the theme, “Lost in Wonder—Contemplative Prayer as a New Way of Experiencing God.” Father spoke on St. Teresa’s *The Book of Her Life* with the focus on Chapter 10 that describes the experience of contemplative prayer.

News from around the Province—News from the New Orleans and Covington Communities

Submitted by Sally Veronica Vlosich, OCDS, Our Lady of Prompt Succor Community, New Orleans

Congratulations to Our Carmelite Sisters and Brother ...

Latisha Payne, (left) First Promise, Covington community; Dr. Marie Mahoney, (middle) Definitive Promise, Covington community; and Nick Signorelli, (right) clothed, New Orleans Community, during Mass Sunday, January 12, 2020 on our Day of Recollection held at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA. President Ryan Matherne, OCDS and Spiritual Director Dr. Susan Weir, OCDS assisted. Fr. Jorge Cabrera, OCD, presenter for the Day of Recollection and Mass Celebrant offered reflections on the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.



A Bit of Poetry

Bonaventure Sauer, OCD

One Dark Day

Good Friday

You lift something like snow, something white
And cold, into Your face. Your face becomes now
White and cold. The wind, too, like desertion

By Your friends, You freely accept, whistling
Through Your ears as though through a skull.
Out of earshot women weep softly—no matter,

You will console them someday. O snowy, pallid
Flesh, how valiantly You took up life's burden.
Now You have no choice but to lay it down.

*

Your death has bled into our lives. Your eyes,
Glazed over like grapes, sweeten wine as if
It were tea. You are our dark sherry now.

Your limbs stiffen, becoming baguettes—their scent
Fills the air and, like a caress, stills Your howling
Into song. "Sleep, my child," You sing, "the sky

Will precede My coming with a sign of the cross.
Dream, instead, of wheat fields in the wind.
Someday we'll all bow to You heavy with grain."

*

Take up this word and speak it abroad—
"On that day He'll have outlasted mountains,
Built continents by the handful, clod upon clod;

He'll have blasted stars like buckshot
Through the window of creation's outermost wall,
Shed silence on Heaven's still restless souls,

The countless who cry— 'the Lord has wounded me,
But He has loved me unfailingly. I see it now.'"

Images of Easter

- (1) A white stone rolls into
The sea and becomes a seashell.
A white wave enfolds it.
- (2) A green and gold bird fits neatly
Into the palm of my hand,
Perched like a newly minted coin.
The wind lifts its song high
And sets it down gently
In a nest of invisible sunlight.
- (3) Fern leaves droop, draped
In thin black ribbons of shadow.
They drink as if from themselves
As a light rain revives them.
- (4) Stars spin round, reflected
In the pitch-black eyes
Of deer, their meek, upturned gaze
As innocent as an African violet.
- (5) Moss hums sleepily
Above the soft murmur of its
Damp bed of wood.
Legends grow here, deep
In the forest, beneath toadstools
And bedtime stories.
- (6) The thought of a crisp apple
Compares poorly with the actual
Taste of a crisp apple. To our
Good fortune and delight, thought
Has turned into taste.
- (7) As night falls all around me,
It leaves me the feel, the form,
The face of its falling.
I pause to let it happen.
"How favored we are," I think.

Book Review—*In Context: Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, and Their World*

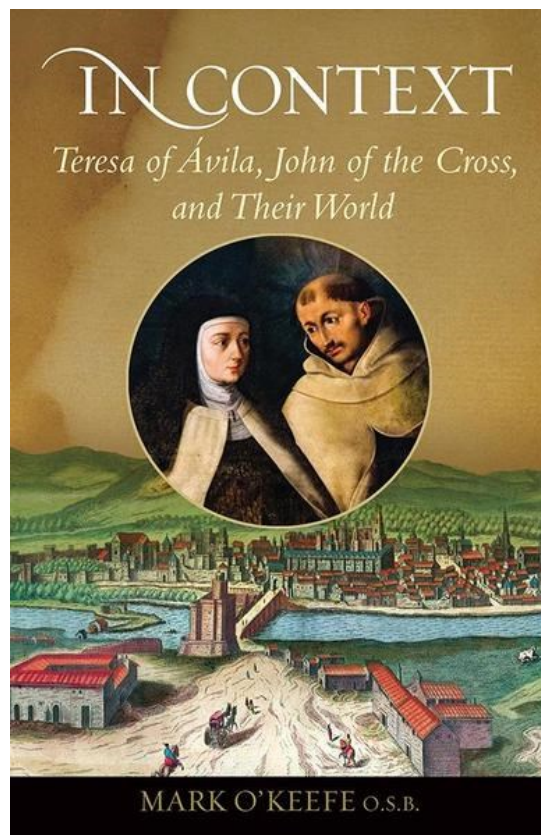
Written by Mark O'Keefe, OSB

St. Teresa of Ávila and St. John of the Cross are among the greatest teachers of prayer in the Christian tradition. For nearly five centuries, their writings on the spiritual life have guided those seeking greater union with God. Beyond the written corpus of these saints, the lived experiences of these reformers of the Carmelite Order also draws fascination. Living in sixteenth-century Spain among kings, prelates, explorers, inquisitors, and reformers, these two saints were formed and sanctified by the context and circumstances of their historical time and place.

In Context: Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, and Their World explores the social, cultural, intellectual, and religious themes that prevailed during the time in which St. Teresa of Ávila and St. John of the Cross lived and breathed. This book is not only a thematic overview but also visits particular situations in the lives of these saints: the events that shaped their writings, their lives, and the Carmelite Reform they initiated.

Offering for the first time in English a comprehensive contextual overview of the Carmelite reformers, Father O'Keefe draws upon pivotal scholarly sources not available to many beginner-to-intermediate students of spirituality. The extensive bibliographies point readers toward the next steps in diving deeper into Carmelite studies. Also including a comprehensive index and 16 pages of color photos, this book is an excellent resource for any earnest student of St. Teresa of Ávila and St. John of the Cross.

This book is available through ICS Publications



Letter from the Superior General



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI
CORSO D'ITALIA, 38
00198 ROMA

Rome, 28 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Order,

On this day when we commemorate the 505th anniversary of the birth of our Holy Mother Saint Teresa, I greet you, using the words with which Teresa used to begin her letters: may *Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit be with you*.

This anniversary reminds us of the great gifts that the Lord gave to Holy Mother. We also remember this year the 50th anniversary of the Doctorate proclaimed by St. Paul VI on September 27, 1970. The Apostolic Letter *Multiformis sapientia Dei*, which I invite you to read and meditate on, recognizes that Teresa “has always been celebrated, both for the extraordinary facts of her life, for the rare virtues of her soul and for her spirit of good judgment”, and “a very sure guide and teacher of sacred sciences”. As Teresa herself wrote, to remember what “is a gift and that we possess it, we are compelled to love the giver.” (cf. *Life* 10:5). Therefore, in recognizing the gifts received from God’s goodness in the lives of our Saints, in the history of our Order, as well as in the personal history of each one of us, everything invites us to thank Him and to grasp the signs of His living, faithful, and active presence in the events of our time.

In this context I would like to recall this year another important event of 20 years ago: the 2nd International Congress of the OCDS held in San Juan de los Lagos (Mexico) from August 31 to September 7, 2000.

In commemorating this event, I would like, first of all, to thank all those who collaborated in the organization and in the organization of the Congress, in particular Fr. Aloysius Deeney OCD (General Delegate for OCDS), Irma Estrada Franco OCDS (General Secretary of the OCDS), and the members of the OCDS of Mexico.

Secondly, after a brief reminder of the Congress, I would like to enumerate some of its fruits, offering some reflections so that you may continue on your path of following Jesus according to the charism of the Teresian Carmel with that attitude dear to the Cardinal, and now Saint, John Henry Newman: “To live is to change, and to be perfect means to have changed many times”.

The 2nd International Congress

The Letter to the Congress participants (of 23 September 1999) stated that “the theme and purpose of the Congress will be the revision of the Rule of Life [of 1979], with particular attention to the responsibilities and gifts of the laity in the Order and in the Church, as expressed in *Christifideles laici*, *Vita Consecrata*, and other documents of the Church”.

This objective responded to the request of the 1st International Congress of the OCDS in 1996 (held in Rome) and the operative conclusions of the OCD General Chapter of 1997: “The Secular Order should be promoted and supported in the various Circumscriptions of the Order, according to the diversity of situations. Particular attention should be given to the revision of the *Rule of Life* from the laity’s point of view” (n. 107.a).

The 2nd Congress, in which about 250 lay and religious delegates participated, had as its motto: *A single Order with the same charism*. It emphasized that the one charism of the Order is lived

Letter from the Superior General

differently by the friars, the nuns, and the seculars, and that from a solid formation on the identity of the laity of the Order, based on the doctrine of our Holy Founding Parents, also springs the essence of their mission, that of witnessing to friendship with Christ and with their brothers and sisters in the midst of the world.

Some Fruits of the Congress

A first fruit of the 2nd Congress was the creation of an International Commission composed of 10 members of the OCDS of different nationalities. The objective was to continue the drafting of the new Constitutions. It was coordinated by the General Delegate and took into account the contributions of the 1st International Congress and the proposals of the working groups of the 2nd Congress, as well as other contributions sent by the Provinces. The editorial work was carried out in 3 years, thus in 2003 a draft of the new Constitutions of the OCDS was presented at the General Chapter of Avila. This draft was then revised by the General Definitory and finally sent to the Holy See, which approved it in June 2003.

The new Constitutions were enriched with the insertion of the text of the Rule of St. Albert. This was an important addition because the Rule is the primordial inspiration common to all: the friars, the nuns and the laity. This was confirmed with the insertion in the Constitutions of the affirmation that *the laity of the OCDS are members of the Order*, like the friars and nuns (cf. *Proemio* and Art. 1); Secular Carmelites live the charism of Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross in the world and enrich consecrated life (OCD friars and nuns) with their secular style of life.

A challenge that perhaps we must continue to face in the circumscriptions is that the experience of the charism of the Teresian Carmel for OCDS should be realized first of all in the family environment, work, and other commitments in the midst of the world. It is there that the witness of the living God, who desires to maintain a relationship of friendship with every human being created in His image and likeness, should take place and bear witness. Unfortunately, it is perceived that there are still members of OCDS who live their vocation only in the sacristies of monasteries or convents, without an effective “spreading” of the charism in the world around them.

Another fruit of the Congress was the clarification of the identity of the laity in the Order. Your vocation is both contemplative, lay and apostolic, which presupposes a daily commitment to integrate these three key elements. This identity brings with it the awareness of having common elements of the Teresian charism with the other branches, with which to collaborate in an interdependence that respects the differences, the right autonomies, and the vocational identity proper to each one.

The autonomy of the OCDS must be well understood. It concerns government according to its own Constitutions and Statutes, but also formation. The accompaniment of the friars, on whom for historical reasons the OCDS depends juridically (cf. Const. 41; Ratio 19; cf. Const. 2), should promote the maturity of lay identity in the Order and fraternal relationships of collaboration, with mutual respect for the autonomy of each one.

A third fruit of the Congress was the emphasis on the need to participate in the mission and apostolate of the Church and the Order as an integral part of the OCDS lay identity. The Church asks for this in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, in *Christifideles laici* (1988) and in *Vita Consecrata* (1996). This dimension was somewhat underestimated and hidden because of a reductive vision of contemplation. Instead, we know that the fruit of authentic contemplative prayer is service to others, striving to bring about “good works” (cf. St. Teresa, 5M 3,11; 7M 4,6) according to one’s own abilities and talents, for the good of the Church, the Order and society, as did Teresa and John of the Cross (cf. Const. 26).

Letter from the Superior General

Unfortunately, with regard to this, there are still misunderstandings and many people think that it is enough to attend community meetings for some practices of devotions, reflection or conferences, but without a real and concrete commitment of service in the activities of the Order or the Church in which one finds oneself. Perhaps this is due to weak formation which does not take into account what the Constitutions recommend: “In the last three years of initial formation there will be a deeper study of Scripture, the documents of the Church, the Saints of the Order, prayer, and how to participate in the apostolate of the Order...” (n. 36 d).

In the Congress, and as it appears in the Constitutions, the importance of the organization of *Provincial Councils* in the circumscriptions of the Order was highlighted (cf. Constitutions 57). Their specific mission is to prepare the Statutes of the circumscription and to coordinate the initiatives of the apostolate and formation in the communities. In this sense, many circumscriptions have organized and developed the OCDS with great commitment and have collaborated to increase awareness of the lay identity in the Order and a mature autonomy, growing in number, internal organization and formation, as well as developing communion among the communities. In other countries or circumscriptions, unfortunately and for various reasons, this has not been the case. The Provincial Council has not acted as a body of communion and animation both in the life of the communities and in relationship with the friars and nuns. And here, for all of us, we have a good way to go according to the principle of *synodality*, as I mentioned in last year’s letter.

Finally, as a further fruit of the Congress, in 2009 the *Ratio Institutionis* of the OCDS was published, which offers the guiding principles for the formation of the laity of the Teresian Carmel, reiterating the need for a solid formation that allows us undertake a vocational journey and service in the mission animated by the spirit of our Saints. More recently, the aspect of fraternal communion in the OCDS has been highlighted with the insertion of the chapter on fraternal communion (3 B) and the paragraph on St. Joseph (31 a). Thus, what is essential in the OCDS has been completed in the documents, defining your identity, objectives and goals as lay members of the Order.

Dear brothers and sisters of the OCDS,

With this commemoration of the Second International Congress of the OCDS, the signs of some of its fruits, as well as commemorating an important event in the history of the OCDS, I would like to thank the Lord with you for his gifts. At the same time, this urges us to grow spiritually, especially in living charity so that we may return love to the infinite Love of the Holy Trinity (cf. John of the Cross, *Song* 38, 2-4).

I urge you to know your documents more and more, especially the Constitutions, both in initial and ongoing formation. Always remember that a charism in the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit; it is a living and dynamic reality which must be constantly cultivated and made to bear fruit, otherwise it rots. It is there, in the documents of the OCDS, that you find the essential elements of the charism of the Teresian Carmel adapted to your lay life. Faced with the many commitments and rapid changes in our post-modern world, many times we risk losing our roots and we forget who we are. Returning from time to time to the Constitutions and the writings of our Saints will confirm you in a solid doctrine that allows you to walk with firmness and enthusiasm on the streets of the world.

I ask the Lord to enlighten you so that you may continue to be faithful to the essential elements of your vocation as Secular Carmelites. May the light and strength which come from prayer as friendship with the Lord and fraternal relationship with your brothers and sisters enable you to respond to the challenges and needs of your personal, family and community realities.

Letter from the Superior General

I also entrust to your fraternal and filial prayer the last *Extraordinary Definitory* of this sexennium, which will take place in September in Mexico City, as well as the preparation work for the General Chapter to be held in May 2021.

I wish a Holy Easter of Resurrection to each of you, your families and communities. May the contemplation of the Risen Christ fill you with peace and joy (cf. *Way* 26:4). May Mary, Queen of Heaven, give you the joy of her Living Son forever.

Fraternally



Fr. Saverio Cannistrà
Fr Saverio Cannistrà OCD
Superior General

PS: I would like to add to you Secular Carmelite sisters and brothers, and to your loved ones, a word of closeness, comfort, and hope in these moments of trial due to the Covid-19. It is an unexpected, fast, and enveloping situation that makes us experience our human fragility and precariousness: physical, psychological, economic, and above all it leads us to reflect on our relationship with God, others, and nature.

Obviously, our first duty is to abide by the dispositions of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in order to avoid exposing ourselves to contagion and putting our own family and the people around us at risk.

I know that there are many challenges facing you, especially being unable to work to support the family. Those who have children and the elderly at home find themselves having to manage their own care and educational needs in confined spaces. Even this creates tension and requires sacrifices. Others, on the other hand, experience loneliness and isolation, locked up at home without the possibility of receiving visitors. These situations require a great deal of balance, great patience, and the daily commitment to live harmoniously and peacefully with others. Definitely, it is a propitious time to exercise the Teresian virtues.

Today we are rightly concerned to equip ourselves with devices to protect ourselves from contagion, but it is also important to wear the armor of which our Rule speaks to us, the “weapons of the virtues, living an intense life of faith, hope and charity” (CC 6 f), trusting in God, who allows trial, but does not abandon us in it. We constantly remember the words of Isaiah, quoted in our Rule: “In silence and hope will be your strength” (Is 35:15; *Rule of St Albert*, 21).

Let us take advantage of this time of apparent powerlessness to pray, read, form ourselves, strengthen family relationships, making virtue out of necessity, as our Holy Mother St. Teresa said (cf. *Way* 32:4; 5; M 3:7; 6 M 5:2). Let us intensify our prayer, asking the Lord’s Mercy for an end to this pandemic and other evils; may He give strength to all those involved in the fight against the virus and assistance to the sick.

Carmelite Obituaries



Betty Sharp, OCDS

Community of Mary Mother of Grace
Oklahoma City, OK

Submitted by William Ginn, Oklahoma City community

Oklahoma City community member, Betty Sharp, passed away June 29, 2019 just shy of her 77th birthday. Betty was clothed and admitted to formation in the Secular Discalced Carmelite community on August 20, 2005. At her First Promise she took the name of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus and the Holy Face. She made her Definitive Promise on June 1, 2011.

Betty Sharp served the Oklahoma City community as Formation Director from 2011 to 2014 and as Councilor from 2014 through 2017. Betty was a member of Little Flower Church in Oklahoma City.

Betty has two sons and two daughters-in-law, all of the Oklahoma City metro. She has five grandchildren, one great grandchild, a niece and two nephews.



Margaret Joan Hudson Brown, OCDS

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Community
Austin, TX

Submitted by by Norma Sigler , OCDS

Joan of the Eucharist – Clothed: December 14, 2002; First Promise: December 11, 2004; Definitive Promise: February 24, 2008; Council 2008-2011; Homebound: February 2013; Deceased: December 5, 2019.

Joan is one of those rare persons who at the prime of her life was deeply touched by God. It was at this time in Joan's life that she was moved to help a good friend establish perpetual adoration chapels throughout Texas. It was through an invitation from Joan's brother and a friend, she consecrated herself to the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites. Joan accepted an invitation to become a Spiritual Director and was mightily blessed to bring many persons to a fruitful relationship with their loving God. Joan was an avid Christian Disciple who literally lived in the "House of Christ," discerned His mode of life, and was with Him at close quarters.

Carmelite Obituaries



Lucille Paradis Brinz (1930-2019)

Community of Our Lady of Prompt Succor
New Orleans, LA
Submitted by Sally Veronica Vlosich, OCDS

Lucille Paradis Brinz passed on to eternal life December 24, 2019 after a long illness. Lucille resided in Metairie, Louisiana and was a parishioner of St. Francis Xavier Church since 1987. She was born August 30, 1930.

She became a member of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS) on July 21, 1991. Lucille was clothed in the Carmelite Ceremonial Scapular under her Devotional Title of Lucille Teresa of the Eucharist. She made her Definitive Promise on December 21, 1997. She served the Community in many ways. She served on the Council 1993-1996 and 2005-2008. She served as the Director of Formation 1996-1999, 1999-2002, 2002-2005 for the New Orleans Community. She was the initial Director of Formation of the newly developing group, the Covington Community.

The funeral Mass was held at 11:00 AM on Monday, December 30, 2019 at St. Francis Xavier Church with Reverend Monsignor Andrew C. Taormina as celebrant. A private burial was held at St. Joseph Abbey in Covington, Louisiana.

Mary Ellen DuVarney, OCDS



Community of St. Therese, the Little Flower
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Submitted by Lucia Gesuelle

Mary Ellen DuVarney of the Holy Name of Jesus, a member of St. Therese the Little Flower Community of Lawrenceville, Georgia passed into eternity on March 9, 2020 at the age of 79. Mary Ellen was a dedicated Carmelite who made her profession on September 9, 2012. Mary Ellen loved her Carmelite spirituality and shared it in many ways. She served our community as a council member, small group leader, historian, embroider of scapulars, as well as other areas of service. She always brought a sweet, gentle spirit to our community. She was an active member of St. Stephen the Martyr Church Parish in Lilburn, Georgia. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Ray and her son, Michael. She is survived by her three children and four grandchildren.



Prayer to St. Therese of the Child Jesus COVID-19

Fr. Luis Gerardo Belmonte-Luna, O.C.D.

O venerable Saint Therese of the Child Jesus,
who promised to bless us with a shower of roses,
we ask that during this time
of anguish, uncertainty and pain,
you shed the fragrance of your roses
upon us and especially upon all those of our brothers
who suffer the consequences of this pandemic,
so that it protects us and stops its spread.
You who wanted to be Love in the heart of the Church,
and that with prayer you sought to obtain
always from God, the favors desired,
we beg you to bless each one of us
and we ask you for the infected who await their healing,
for the doctors and nurses who care for the sick,
for the chaplains who comfort them,
for the families of the victims who suffer,
and for the deceased who are already resting.
Intercede for us beloved little flower before your beloved Jesus,
for us to achieve the grace we ask for.
Teach us, through your spiritual little way:
Humility, to abandon ourselves to the will of God;
and obedience, to collaborate in what is asked of us
for the well-being and care of all.
May Mary whom you called "more Mother than Queen",
join us on this journey
and keep us faithful at the foot of Calvary
throwing our flowers. Amen.

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus
Pray for us

* 24 Glories are prayed (one for each year of the Saint's life)



Painting found at the
Basilica of the Little Flower
San Antonio Texas.



Prayer to Mary during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS



Holy Virgin of Guadalupe,
Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.
We fly to you today as your beloved children.
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son,
as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother,
and gain for our nation and world,
and for all our families and loved ones,
the protection of your holy angels,
that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted,
we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,
wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing,
teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be
patient and kind.
Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to
our hearts.

We come to you with confidence,
knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother,
health of the sick and cause of our joy.
Shelter us under the mantle of your protection,
keep us in the embrace of your arms,
help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus.
Amen.

Parting Words

St. John of the Cross

"It brings special happiness to a person to understand that God is never absent, not even from a soul in mortal sin (and how much less from one in the state of grace). What more do you want, O soul! And what else do you search for outside, when within yourself you possess your riches, delights, satisfaction, fullness, and kingdom - your Beloved whom you desire and seek? Be joyful and gladdened in your interior recollection with him, for you have him so close to you" (Spiritual Canticle 1, 8).

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Province, which has jurisdiction over OCDS members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas.

Oklahoma Province members wishing to submit articles for publication in the *Flos Carmeli* or for subscription information, please contact Maxine Latiolais, Provincial Council *Flos Carmeli* coordinator, at flos.submit@gmail.com

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 2020-2023 Triennium:

Anna Peterson, San Antonio, TX, President

Barbara A. Basgall, Oklahoma City, OK

Mark Calvert, Knoxville, TN

Maxine Latiolais, New Iberia, LA

Jillison Parks, Savannah, GA