



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI
Corso d'Italia, 38
00198 Roma – Italy

LETTER OF THE DEFINITORY (22)

15 September 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel:

PEACE.

On September 8th we began our 22nd Definitory meeting in Rome, presided at by Fr Saverio Cannistrà, Superior General. We worked till 13th September, although Fr. Marcos Juchem had to leave a day earlier because of prior commitments in Latin America and on 10th September we suspended the session so that Fr Emilio Martínez could go to Spain for matters related to the Fifth Centenary of St. Teresa.

We dedicated much of our time to assessing the Extraordinary Definitory of Korea. We hope you have already received Fr General's report on the state of the Order which was given during that meeting, as well as the final message.

As regards the next General Chapter, to be held in 2015, the reflections of the Definitory in Korea call us to focus the attention of the Chapter on the essential elements of our charism, as it is embodied in the Church and world of today. The Chapter work should have a follow-through for the whole Order, one that helps realize a revitalization of the Teresian charism in everyone's life.

We are invited to respond personally to questions posed by Fr General in his report: "How do we live? Where is our vitality and how do we express it as religious?" We cannot be satisfied if our answers only reveal dissatisfaction, discouragement, desire for change, need to overcome individualism and grow in fraternal communication. We need to awaken a dynamism that would transform the way we live as sons and daughters of Teresa, so that it may contribute to awakening the world; we need to propose a new way of living, one that is possible and that we can incarnate, and which would ultimately help us to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the people of today.

During this process it will be essential to raise one fundamental question: What kind of person do I/we want to be? If we do not respond consciously and explicitly, we will answer implicitly, through our way of life, though we may not be aware we are doing so.

If we want to adequately make the journey proposed, we concluded that a number of things are important:

Firstly, it is necessary that we be people of *hope*. We have to overcome the disappointments that lead to a pessimistic view of life and of ourselves; thus, when we face this process we cannot simply say that we are too old or too young or that we cannot ask these questions of each other because we have difficulty in communicating, or that our immediate interests require our time, time that we should be devoting to this fundamental task. If we go ahead with this proposal it is because we have hope: hope in God and hope in the capacity of each of our brothers and sisters. We ask that you share this hope with us.

In the second place, it is necessary to increase our *understanding*. We constantly receive help in the form of documents of the Church or of the Order, as well as analysis of the local and global socio-political situation. A superficial reading of these things is not good enough, not to mention approaching them with prejudice because we are not willing to change our established beliefs, convinced that we know all we need to know and no one can convince us otherwise. With this attitude, the most we read is what reinforces our present position. This is not the right attitude. We are called to listen sincerely, humbly, taking seriously what we are told, being open to the light that can change our way of seeing things and help us improve.

Finally, we must also improve our *ability to reflect*. Once we have assimilated the word transmitted to us, we must learn to meditate and study it further with interest, without seeking a quick answer or believing that we have understood everything at the first reading. Allow time for the words to get rooted within us, to enrich us and bear fruit.

In the light of these three requirements, apart from other Chapter matters, we will seek means, both during the preparation for and running of the Chapter, to have space for a robust and valuable dialogue; we understand that we have to learn to dialogue and to synthesize without losing any valuable contribution so as to come to clear conclusions that can be acted on. Among other things, we will see to it that the documents needed for reflection duly reach you, so that you can study them personally.

As a first step, we have created a pre-Chapter commission, with Fr Saverio as president, which will have its first meeting between 17th and 22nd November. This commission shall also include the following religious: Fr George Tambala (Definitor for Africa, Malawi, Navarra), Fr Daniel Chowning (Washington), Fr Francisco Javier Mena (Caribbean), Fr Łukasz Kansy (Warsaw), Fr Miguel Marquez (Castille), Fr Prasad Theruvathu (Manjummel).

As well as the important issues mentioned above, this commission will also examine and make proposals to the Definitory about the manner of inviting our Discalced Carmelite Sisters and the OCDS to the General Chapter.

Turning to other matters dealt with during these days, perhaps that of greater significance is the decision to establish the Iberian Province in Spain under the title of St. Teresa of Jesus, by suppressing and merging into one five of the present provinces, namely Andalusia, Aragon and Valencia, Burgos, Castile and Catalonia.

This decision of the Definitory is the result of the work conducted over the years by the members of the suppressed Provinces, in order to achieve a fusion that would represent the best and most effective presence of these sons of Teresa in the territory entrusted to them.

The extraordinary Chapter of the new Province will take place in Ávila between 4 and 12 February 2015 and will be presided over Fr General, in accordance with our Constitutions. We request your prayers for this important event.

As decided at the Extraordinary Definitory, this Definitory has asked the CICLSAL for the necessary dispensation to allow the Iberian Province, for this time alone, to be represented at the General Chapter by its Provincial and five *Socii*, one from each of the suppressed provinces.

We have also studied requests for recognition as Provinces from some growing Circumscriptions. In response, we will present the petition of the Commissariat of the Philippines to the General Chapter to be raised to the status of Province.

As for the economic report that our General Bursar, Fr Attilio Ghisleri, gives in each of our meetings, we are happy to inform that, because of your generosity and the work that we carry out, the general house has a discreet positive balance, with which to assist several needs of the Order that we come to know of.

We try — and we could not do it without your help — to meet the expenses that some of our houses and monasteries are unable to cover, especially, but not solely, with regard to formation. During this meeting of our Definitory, we were happy to be able to respond to many needs.

We have received donations from some monasteries in difficult situations facing closure and, despite this, the first thing they think of is to share their property, through the Center of the Order, with brothers and sisters in need. It would be unfair not to share the deep feelings with which we receive these donations from monasteries destined to disappear, living in situations of real distress. We are moved particularly in contacting communities of sisters who, with realism and courage, but also with a lot of pain, face the closure of their monasteries with faith, hope and especially charity: after providing for the needs of older sisters and assuring a fair and adequate support in their own weakness, they immediately think of the poorer monasteries and ask us to be a channel of their support for them.

How deeply we are moved and gladdened by this expression of Teresian love, which reaches beyond all boundaries! With what pride and sense of responsibility do we set about coming to the aid of the poorer monasteries on behalf of our beloved sisters!

If you use *Credito Bergamasco* in transferring euros, we request you to take note of these bank details which have changed as a result of its merging with *Banco Popolare* of Italy:

IBAN: IT 74 M 05034 03255 0000 0000 1519

BIC or SWIFT: BAPPIT21A19

The address remains the same: Credito Bergamasco, via Buoncompagni 14,
00187 Rome

An institution of particular importance to us is the Historical Institute; we all know of its publications. The Definitory has decided to establish a committee who will submit a plan in December to re-launch the activities of this institution.

Moving to another matter, the Definitory, with the help of Fr Julio Almansa, secretary for missions, has answered some questions submitted by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, ahead of its 15th General Assembly. During our meeting, we have analyzed these answers, highlighting from a Teresian perspective, today's challenges of missionary evangelization.

We have also studied the report of Fr Jerome P. Paluku about his participation in the 65th Conference of NGOs, held at the headquarters of the United Nations from 27th to 29th of August last.

During our meeting we also turned our attention to the Centenaries that are approaching, in particular that of the Fifth Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa. Please pay attention to our presence on the internet so as to be aware of what is being planned. As some communities do not use the internet, we request the Major Superiors to keep them informed of the latest developments.

Naturally, these Centenaries impose a financial burden on the Center of the Order. Recently you will also have received a joint letter written by the Prior General of the O. Carm. and our Fr General, calling for a collection on 12 October this year for the restoration of the Wadi es-Siah, birthplace of both Orders. We hope there will be a good response.

As for the Teresian Centenary, we will shortly send you information about the program. For all who want to continue their collaboration, please contact: donativos@stj500.com. Thank you for your continuous support, which we highly value.

Your brothers in the Carmel of Teresa, Joseph and Mary.

P. Saverio Cannistrà, Sup. General

P. Emilio J. Martínez

P. Albert Wach

P. Augustine Mulloor

P. Robert Paul

P. Marcos Juchem

P. George Tambala

P. John Grennan

L.D.V.M.