

OCDS Provincial Newsletter



California-Arizona Province



October 1, 2013

Praised be Jesus Christ!

This OCDS Provincial Newsletter is the first one written with the help of all the members of our OCDS Provincial Council. The Council met August 30 - September 1 at Mount St. Joseph in San Jose. The following picture was taken at that time.



Provincial Council: (L to R) Cheri Kluever, Rebecca Lambert, Fr. Donald Kinney, Erin Foord, Cindy Sliger, and Lucy Okoh.

The Council worked hard and accomplished a lot. This newsletter summarizes much of our work, which we wanted to share with you. Presidents and group leaders, please make a copy of this newsletter for each of your members—and for your extended members as well.

As you know, Fr. Alzimir DeBastiani, our new OCDS General Delegate in Rome, has been working to add two new sections to the OCDS Constitutions after receiving suggestions from provinces around the world. These changes have been approved by our Order's General Definitory that includes our Father General and his eight definitors and are now being reviewed by the Holy See. We pray they will soon be approved.

Our OCDS Provincial Council has been revising a number of our Provincial Statutes including the new Visitors and Attendance Policies. These changes and revisions to our Statutes will be submitted to the General Definitory for their December meeting. If approved, they will be in effect for our upcoming community elections this spring (see below). We will announce the changes to the Constitutions and Provincial Statutes as soon as we hear from Rome.

The big event of this triennium was undoubtedly our Western Regional OCDS Congress held June 20-23, 2013, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Portland, Oregon. The theme was *Seeking Christ through the Interior Castle in Carmelite Secular Life*. With 430 people attending, this Congress was the largest—and many say the best—Congress in our history. There were OCDS members and OCD friars from all over our Province, from the Oklahoma and Washington Provinces, and from British Columbia in Canada. People are still talking about what a powerful, spirit-filled family reunion it was.

A congress is “a labor of love”—much labor and more love! We are deeply grateful to co-chairpersons Lee Ann Trunk and Alice Gustafson and to the Portland OCDS Community for their untiring work to help make this Congress such a tremendous grace. We also deeply appreciate all of you who came and also all of you who could not come but who prayed and sacrificed so much for the blessings the Congress continues to bring.

Many communities and groups in the Province and around the country are ordering CDs of the Congress conferences and homilies to help in formation. You can order CDs and also see photos of the Congress by clicking on the following link: www.2013ocdscongress.net.

The year 2014 is a very significant one for us Teresian Carmelites. This is the year when the friars meet for their Provincial Chapter where decisions will be made and elections will take place for leaders to guide us for the next three years. In the Secular Order, our canonically established communities also have elections for leadership according to our Provincial Statutes, Sec. XVIII #1: “The elections shall be held every three years in the spring prior to the Provincial Chapter of the friars in May.” The friars’ Provincial Chapter will take place from May 13-23, 2014, so all canonically established communities must hold their elections before May 13.

For recognized groups and study groups, this time of transition between one triennium and another is a good opportunity for a change in leadership is needed. Since it is the Provincial Delegate who appoints leaders for recognized groups and study groups, he is be contacted concerning any change in leadership.

The first step in preparation for elections is to pay special attention to the Provincial Statutes as follows:

Sec. XVIII: Procedure for Electing the Council in Canonically Established Communities

2. (a) **Two months prior** to the election a nominating committee of at least three professed members, only one of whom could be a member of the Council, shall be chosen and notified by the Council. The nominating committee will be announced to the members at a meeting one month in advance of the meeting when the election is to take place.

2. (b) Also at the meeting **two months prior**, the Council will distribute a list of members eligible to serve in office and eligible to vote. Only professed members of the Community are eligible to vote. To be eligible to vote, a member must be professed, on the community roster, and in compliance with the Community attendance policy regarding voter eligibility.

In other words, if your elections are to be held in March, these two steps must take place in January, which means prior to that you must do what is necessary to prepare the list of members who are eligible to both serve and vote. (If your elections are in April, this must be done in February, etc.)

The following prayer can be prayed in community and individually as we prepare for elections this spring:

O God, Most Holy Trinity,
through your grace the Church gave birth to the Order of Carmel
so that we might live in fraternity and prayer,
and, after the example of Mary and Elijah,
be a prophetic presence in our world.
We ask you to send the Holy Spirit upon our Community
as we prepare to elect a new Council.
We pray that this be a grace-filled event for us.
May our preparation renew in each of us
an openness to the working of the Holy Spirit
to follow Jesus Christ with love and fidelity,
and live the spirit of our Carmelite charism.
May each of us be open to serving the Community in office if called upon.
We ask you, Most Holy Trinity,
to send your blessing upon us all
through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother and Patroness of Carmel.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

We want to promote two special events for August 2014: The Discalced Carmelite Friars and Carmelite Family of our Province are sponsoring a major celebration for the 500th anniversary of the birthday of St. Teresa, to be held August 21-23 in San Jose, California. The theme is “The Creative Spiritual Genius of St. Teresa of Avila Today.” For more information, click on the following link to log on to the website at www.stj500westernus.com.

It is the Oklahoma Province’s turn to host the next Regional Congress that is to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, August 21-23, 2014. The theme for this Congress is “Blessed is the heart in love, Centered on God alone.” More information is available by clicking on this link: www.2014ocdscongress.net.

Speaking of the 2015 Centenary of the Birth of St. Teresa, some communities and groups in the Province have been following the invitation of the friars’ 2009 General Chapter to read and meditate on the books of St. Teresa during the five years leading up to her Centenary. For this last year of preparation, we are encouraged to read St. Teresa’s minor works and letters (click on: <http://www.iwasbornforyou.com>). This link can also be found at the bottom of our website’s home page by clicking on this link: www.ocds.info. This reading is appropriate for those who have made their definitive promise and for ongoing formation discussions. However, for those in initial formation, we want to emphasize that the requirements found in the Formation Guidelines come first. As our *Ratio Institutionis* # 9 explains: “The period of introduction to the life of the Secular Carmelite is a process of six years duration. This process is described in the Constitutions #36 as “gradual.” In addition to flexibility on the part of both the beginner and the community, both must also be patient with the process of doing things step by step. Our Provincial Council wants to emphasize that the suggested readings for St. Teresa’s Centenary cannot substitute for the preparations for making the promise as outlined in the curricula for the Aspirancy, Formation I, and Formation II (see *Formation Guidelines*, pp. 9-21).

After much consultation and discernment, our OCDS Provincial Council has decided to raise annual dues to the Central Office from \$25 to \$35. Our Province's dues have not been raised in many years. Since expenses have increased over this period of time, the increase has become necessary. We also need to make extensive repairs to our OCDS Central Office, a wooden modular building originally installed in the mid-1980s.

We hope this increase will not be a hardship. If a member cannot afford all or even part of this amount, the community does not need to make it up. Dues should be sent to the Central Office in February, along with a community/group's annual financial report (see Provincial Statutes, Sec. XXII, #2.) When sending in dues, please do not include a listing of those who have or have not paid. This is confidential to each community and group.

Please note the current listing of members of our Provincial Council.

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We are grateful to Erin Foord for his fine article on St. Teresa and St. Thérèse, which is attached. We pray these two doctors of the Church help us to be more and more grateful for our magnificent calling as a Carmelite. May we deepen our calling in prayer and community and share it in love and service!

Our October Saints

by Erin Foord, OCDS



The month of October is the annual celebration of two of our greatest saints: Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux. It is a time for reflection and recommitment to their teachings and the charism embodied by their lives. Our holy Mother, St. Teresa, whose solemnity is celebrated on October 15, was a sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, spiritual leader, and religious reformer who lived the mystical tradition and promoted contemplative prayer as a means to union with God. St. Thérèse, whose feast is celebrated on October 1, was a nineteenth-century devout young French woman who entered the convent at age fifteen. Her life personifies the “little way” of spiritual childhood, which is really a synthesis of both of our mystical Doctors, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, and the universal imperative of Our Lord, *...unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 18:3).*

The portrayal of these very different women never fails to be insightful and inspiring. Their lives provide a unique perspective into the nature of holiness.

St. Teresa, during her life, had mystical experiences, produced numerous written works, and reformed the Carmelite religious order establishing many new foundations. In contrast, St. Thérèse, during her lifetime, never left the convent she entered, never reformed a religious order, and never performed great works. She wrote a brief account of her life that was edited and published posthumously. Yet within twenty-eight years of her death, her story with God’s grace had been responsible for so many great works and reformed hearts, that the public acclaim was so great she was canonized a saint. The message of her life is still as compelling and simple as it was over a century ago.



As different as their lives were, Saints Teresa and Thérèse also possess many striking similarities. On an obvious level, both are women baptized Teresa, both were cloistered Discalced Carmelites nuns, and both wrote fascinating autobiographies. Not as obvious is that they both patiently endured severe physical sufferings and emphasized the importance of the virtues, especially humility, exemplifying them in their lives. The virtue of humility is one of the many themes which overlap in their teachings. Yet, the fact that both women exemplify heroic virtue and holiness of life alone is not why these women were proclaimed saints and doctors of the Church. More importantly, it is that both women radiated an intense love for God in their lives and in their writings.

Our October Saints (continued)

It was this fervent passion for Christ expressed in their lives and captured in their writings that was the source of their holiness. The nature of holiness is that it, “is deeply personal, but it is also communal and historic. Holiness is not something we do for ourselves; it is something God does in us if we cooperate. And it is something he does in us not for us alone, but for others and for all of history.” So states Matthew Kelly while referencing St. Thérèse in his book *Rediscover Catholicism* where he proposes that “Every act of holiness is an historic event. Every time we choose to love God and neighbor we change the course of human history, because our holiness echoes in the lives of people in other places and other times.” This is certainly demonstrated in the lives of our two saints.

We know that St. Thérèse was deeply influenced by St. Teresa. She grew up with a special affection for her namesake, as is apparent in her autobiography where she states, “When the preacher spoke about St. Teresa, Papa leaned over and whispered: ‘Listen carefully, little Queen, he’s talking about your Patroness.’” Thérèse responds that indeed she did “listen carefully.” She looked to St. Teresa as a model throughout her life. She began practicing recollected prayer at age eleven and once told a priest, “Father, I want to love God as much as St. Teresa did.”

Thérèse also was particularly devoted to the Infant Jesus, just as her spiritual mother Teresa of Jesus had been. As a nun, Thérèse took a similar name to her Holy Mother, being called Thérèse of the Child Jesus, incorporating their shared devotion. In the convent, Thérèse became well acquainted with her Holy Mother’s writings. On the wall of her cell with Teresa’s picture was one of Teresa’s favorite verses: *Forever will I sing the mercies of the Lord (Ps. 89:2)*. St. Thérèse also used this verse at the beginning of her autobiography, in which she makes several direct references to St. Teresa.

The influence of St. Teresa on St. Thérèse is unmistakable, and the influence of both their lives continues to resonate in the lives of all those touched by their stories. Their lives of holiness provide an intriguing, multifaceted portrait of human nature responding to the divine invitation and influence. Their motivation and personal sense of passion and purpose is a model of love and devotion that shines as a beacon and call to holiness down through the ages. They inspire us to want to love Jesus more and show us the way to live that out in ordinary life. It is impossible to measure our saints’ impact on history, but from the groundswell of devotion that continues to grow in their memory, it is vast. In this light, St. Teresa’s proclamation, “I was born for you,” from her poem, *In the Hands of God*, takes on a different but equally poignant meaning. Our saints were not only born for God, they were also born for us: for you and me. They are God’s gift and blessing to humanity as they share their path to holiness with all who are open to receiving it.