

# Communicationes N. 262

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### **Father Gracián**

#### **Fourth centenary of the death of Father Jerome Gracián**

##### **Brussels-Belgium, September 25, 2014 (Communicationes)**

The Eucharist was celebrated in Brussels on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the death of Father Jerome Gracián, Discalced Carmelite friend and counselor of Saint Teresa who died as a Carmelite of the Ancient Observance in that city on September 21, 1614. Father General, Saverio Cannistrà, presided accompanied by Father Fernando Millán, O.Carm. Prior General.

They concelebrated with several members of Roman general councils and curias from both orders, as well as the Provincial for Venice, Father Aldino Cazzago (the Brussels convent is in that province), and the Provincial for Castile, Father Miguel Márquez, president of the Iberian Conference of Provincials.

Also present was a large group of the faithful. We make particular mention of representatives from the Secular Order of the Anglo-Irish Province and also members of the Teresian family from Spain.

In his homily, Father Saveria wanted to approach Gracián's life with the attitude of loving attention befitting a brother who sees in the other the action of God, in whose gifts he wanted to live according to the Rule of Carmel.

Gracián was Teresa's "Paul" –continued Father Saverio– full of evangelical zeal and at the same time a weak man who, as he confesses in his "Pilgrimage of Anastasius," can boast of his afflictions.

He shared with Mother Teresa and her Discalced nuns an absolutely unique relationship in absolute reciprocity and soaked up her missionary spirit, authentically contemplative amidst the work of governance and pastoral obligations.

Father General concluded by noting that Jerome Gracián, refined and without protective armor in an era "of iron," fought without giving his back to the battle, for which he paid what in the eyes of men was a high price. Nevertheless he won the most important battle of all – that of living by the Gospel which he preached.

After the Eucharist, Father Saverio uncovered a plaque affixed to the church in homage to such an outstanding Carmelite.

The tribute to Father Gracián organized by the O. Carm. and OCD generalates will continue in Madrid on November 12 and 13 with a series of conferences and a concluding Eucharist on November 14, in which the letter jointly written by Fathers Fernando and Saverio will be presented.

### **Brother Jean Thierry Ebogo**

#### **The process for beatification and canonization of Brother Jean Thierry Ebogo, Cameroonian Carmelite, is underway**

**Rome-Italy, September 25, 2014 (Communicationes).**- On September 9, 2014, the last public session of the diocesan process for the beatification of Brother Jean-Thierry Ebogo, Cameroonian Carmelite, took place.

Jean-Thierry Ebogo died on January 5, 2006, and his remains are in the convent of Discalced Carmelite Fathers in Nkolbisson (Yaoundé). The closing Mass of the diocesan process took place in the parish of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Legnano, Milan, with Cardinal Angelo Scola, archbishop of Milan, presiding.

May these grateful lines be transformed into prayer so that God crowns the work he began in this young Carmelite, and the Church and Carmel of Cameroon may count among its children another saint to intercede for us before the Father.

## Africa

### A new team heads up the Carmelite Association of Francophone Africa

**Nairobi-Karen, Kenya, September 25, 2014 (Communicationes).**- The 7th General Assembly of the Association of Carmels of Francophone Africa took place from August 17 to September 8, 2014, in Nairobi-Karen, near the spirituality center of the Carmelite Fathers. The Carmelites who met there formed a panoply of different national origins: Rwanda, Congo, Togo, Italy, Cameroon, France, Switzerland, and Colombia. There were a total of 24 Carmelites representing Carmels from the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi. The religious assistant, Father Festus Kobla-Fia, OCD, was present for the entire assembly and presided as the Delegate of the Father General over the elections that took place on September 3. The following appointments resulted from those elections:

President: Sister Domitille of Logbakro Carmel (Ivory Coast)  
1st Counselor: Sister Atenaiz of Grand-Bassam Carmel (Ivory Coast)  
2nd Counselor: Sister Mwamini of Kinshasa Carmel (DRC)  
3rd Counselor: Sister Marie-Claver of Cyangugu Carmel (Rwanda),  
4th Counselor: Sister Bénédicte of Figuil Carmel (Cameroon),  
Alternate: Sister Maria Bianca of Yaoundé Carmel (Cameroon).

During the three-month meeting, the nuns received formation on the Interior Castle from Father Maximiliano Herráiz; on leadership from Sister Jeanne Bashige (DRC; from the Sisters of the Holy Family *d'Elmez*, a member of the Montreal Institute of Formation and Integration [IFHIM]); and on "our Carmelite identity in view of the 5th centenary of the birth of our Mother, Saint Teresa," by Father Festus Awunyo.

There were also guest sisters whose presence greatly enriched the encounter as a sign of the vitality of Carmel in Africa: Sisters Anne Marie (president) and Marie Paule (counselor) from the Association Our Lady of the Isles and of the Indian Ocean; Sisters Bendida (president) and Assumpta (counselor) of the Association of Carmels of Anglophone Africa; and Sister Patricia, counselor of the Thérèse-Elisabeth Federation of North France.

On August 24, the Carmelite Fathers of Nairobi jointly celebrated the opening of the 5th centenary of the birth of Saint Teresa.

## Annals of the General Archives

### Botany and the Discalced Carmel

**Rome-Italy, September 25, 2014 (Communicationes).**- **Father Óscar I. Aparicio, OCD General Archivist.** The title of this brief article may sound strange. In it I would like to introduce a Neapolitan friar who, as he was proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in the East, took advantage of the opportunity to study the plants and herbs he found along the way. We are speaking of Father **Mateo of Saint Joseph**, in the same century as **Pedro Foglia**. He was born in Marcinese

(Naples) in 1612. He made his profession in the Discalced Carmel on October 25, 1639, having studied medicine before that. He was sent as a missionary to Mount Lebanon in 1644. In 1648 he was sent to Persia and was a missionary in Basra and Muscat. In 1651 he was sent to Tata, India, currently in the north of India and south of Pakistan. In 1655 he was appointed Vicar of Mount Carmel although he never became prior. In 1657 he accompanied Bishop Sabastini to the Malabar region of India and remained there until his death in Kochi in 1691.

In the General Archives we have 15 letters written by him. The first four were written in Bander-Congo, the following six in Basra, and the five remaining in Mount Lebanon. The letters from his time in India are kept in the Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome.

We know he wrote a book about the language of the Mandeans with its syntactical rules, literature, and alphabet. To this day we do not know where it is....

In the Archives we have a rare manuscript titled, *Viaggio nel Bander-Congo* (Persia), which has curious drawings and Arab writing. Its call number is AGOCD, Section A, Shelf 293,g.

However, his most famous book is the one dedicated to Malabar Botany. It is titled, *Viridarium Orientale*, and is a compendium of medicinal plants, sketches of them, and their medicinal properties. It is a manuscript, 157 pages in length with 141 illustrations. It can be found in the National Library of Rome. (The old call number was Vittorio Emanuele Library, Fondo Varia, 418 (178).) Father Mateo also collaborated on the famous 12-volume work *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*, Amsterdam, 1678.

May these paragraphs serve to make known this Discalced Carmelite missionary who loved botany.