

# Congress Chronicles

## Promoting the Ontario, California OCDS Congress of the CA-AZ Province



**Welcome** to the “Congress Chronicles”, sponsored by the OCDS Central Office of the California-Arizona Province. We have much good news to share about our next Congress, we want to ask for your prayers, and *especially we want to inspire you to come!*

Our Province hosts a Congress every three years, and each time there has been a considerable increase in attendance. In 2010 for the Bakersfield Congress, 350 people came. In 2013 for the Portland Congress, there were 426 people. In 2016 for the San Jose Congress, there were 527 people. We are anticipating even more in Ontario!

A Congress is *the* major event of our triennium. It is a powerful spiritual experience, a “family reunion” beyond compare. It brings together Secular Carmelites from all over our Province, plus the Washington and Oklahoma Provinces, and even Uganda, Canada and Rome. So many people have told us that attending a Congress has made a difference in their vocation and in the life of their whole Community!

The Ontario Congress is sponsored by the Alhambra OCDS Community and the Alhambra OCDS Group. The Alhambra Community is the oldest and largest community in our Province. In 2015, with 108 active members, a decision was made to make a new foundation. The Alhambra Community and their foundation, the Alhambra Group, will be hosting this Congress together.



The Chairperson is **Jim Montpas** (left), assisted by **Amy Holmes** (middle) and **Stan Interrante** (right). They are already working hard for its success.





**Ontario DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel**

This is the fourth Congress we have held at a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. Our superlative experiences in Bakersfield, Portland, and San Jose were a major factor in us choosing this beautiful 4-star DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Ontario. We were able to negotiate a beautiful rate: \$149, with up to four people per room.

The Ontario DoubleTree is close to the Ontario International Airport (ONT), and there is a complimentary airport shuttle. It is just off the I-10 Freeway. See the Hotel website for more information and photos: [www.hilton.com/DoubleTree/Ontario](http://www.hilton.com/DoubleTree/Ontario)

A number of OCDS communities are within driving distance of this Hotel. We are encouraging commuters to attend. This time parking is free!

**Theme** On July 28-29, a *Congress Planning Summit* was held at El Carmelo Retreat House in Redlands, California. Attending were: Jim Montpas, Amy Holmes, Stan Interrante, Marie Park, Emma Forlanda (Co-Chairperson of the 2016 San Jose Congress), and Lee Ann Trunk (Co-Chairperson of the 2013 Portland Congress). We also consulted with Doreen Glynn Pawski (Chairperson of the 1993 San Francisco National Congress) and Cindy Sliger (Co-Chairperson of the 2007 Bellevue Congress), who were not able to attend.

After much prayer and discernment, we chose the theme:

*“Secular Carmelites:  
Radiating Gratitude and Love”*

## ~~~ Speakers ~~~



**Sister Regina Marie Gorman, O.C.D.** is a member of the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles. She was raised in Los Angeles where she entered Carmel in 1972. She holds a

Masters in Theology and Christian Ministry from Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH. Sister is known for her tireless commitment to bring Jesus Christ to those with whom she works and serves. She has done this as Vicar General, Superior General, Directress of Novices, junior high teacher, public speaker, and above all, as a friend and companion. Through the gift of the Carmelite charism, Sister Regina Marie continues to invite countless people into the presence of the living God.

Sister Regina Maria spoke at our Bakersfield OCDS Congress. Since then, there have been numerous requests for us to invite her again.



**Fr. Alzinir Debastiani, O.C.D.** is from Brazil in the state of Santa Catarina. He made his First Profession in 1984 and was ordained a priest in 1994. He has served as pastor, formator, OCDS Provincial Delegate, and Provincial. In 2008 he was appointed General Delegate for the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. He travels extensively in

Europe, South America, and Africa. He first visited this country for the 2013 OCDS Congress and since then has attended most of the congresses for the three Provinces. At this early date, Fr. Alzinir can only tentatively accept our invitation to attend and speak at the Ontario Congress. We are praying that he will be able to come



**Fr. Juan Elias Medina, O.C.D.** is from Mountain View, California. He entered the California-Arizona Province of Discalced Carmelite Friars in 2002. He studied philosophy at Mount Angel Seminary and theology at the Teresianum in

Rome. He was ordained a priest in 2011. Fr. Juan Elias served almost two years at our Province's mission in Jinja, Uganda. Then he was associate pastor at Santa Cruz Parish in Tucson. As of January 2, he is our O.C.D.S. Provincial Delegate and resides at El Carmelo Retreat House in Redlands.



**Marie-Paul Stevens, O.C.D.S.** is from Belgium. She was raised in a good Catholic family, and her father was a permanent deacon. When she was a girl, her mother gave her a copy of Elizabeth of the Trinity's "Prayer to the Trinity". From then on, Marie-Paul's

friendship with Elizabeth has deepened. Marie-Paul taught theology for thirteen years in a Catholic boys' school. However, in 1997 she was diagnosed with Sjögren's Syndrome, an auto-immune disease which gradually made her an invalid. By 2002 she was preparing to die. In order to thank her friend Elizabeth for her friendship, Marie-Paul made one last visit with friends to the Carmel of Elizabeth of the Trinity outside Dijon in Flavignerot, France. After praying fervently in the chapel, she and her friends were having a picnic lunch near the parking lot. Suddenly, without warning, Marie-Paul received an instantaneous healing. All her pain left her. She said that she felt as if a lead cape had fallen from her shoulders. She jumped up and cried out, "I don't hurt any more... I'm healed! I'm healed!" In 2016, after years of investigation, the Vatican approved this miracle for the Canonization of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Some of us met Marie-Paul Stevens on a pilgrimage to France in September 2017. She now travels to speak throughout France and Europe—in gratitude and love. Marie-Paul has also accepted an invitation to speak at the 2018 OCDS Congress of the Washington Province in Columbus, Ohio.



**Br. John Cannon, O.C.D.** is from Birmingham, AL. He received a BA in Political Science and a BBA in Finance from the University of Notre Dame, a Masters in Politics and International Relations from Oxford University, and an MBA

from Harvard Business School. Prior to entering Carmel, he served as a policy advisor to the Governor of Alabama and later worked as a financial consultant. He entered the Discalced Carmelites of the California-Arizona Province in 2012, professing temporary vows in 2013. Br. John has been studying philosophy and theology at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon since 2014 in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. He is currently in his second year of theology.

## ~~~ Celebrants and Homilists at the Eucharist ~~~

### Archbishop Christophe Pierre Papal Nuncio to the United States



Archbishop Christophe Pierre was born in Rennes, France. He completed his primary education in Madagascar, and his secondary schooling in France and in Morocco. When he was growing up, he was introduced to Carmelite spirituality through his mother's copy of *I Want to See God* by Bl. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus. He attended the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Rennes and the Catholic Institute of Paris.

He was ordained priest in 1970. Then he earned a Master in Sacred Theology in Paris and a Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome. He completed his studies at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, in Rome. In 1977 he began his service in the Diplomatic Corps of the Holy See.

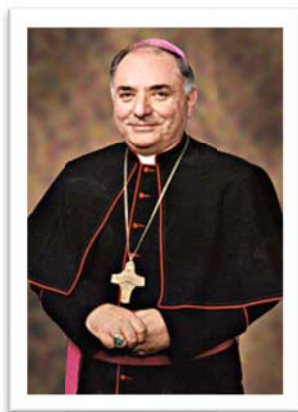
Subsequently, he served in New Zealand, the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Brazil, and at the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

He was elected Titular Archbishop of Gunela on July 12, 1995, and received the Episcopal Consecration on September 24, 1995, in Saint-Malo, France.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre served as Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti (1995 - 1999), to Uganda (1999-2007) and then to Mexico (2007-2016). He was appointed as Apostolic Nuncio of the United States of America by His Holiness, Pope Francis on April 12, 2016.

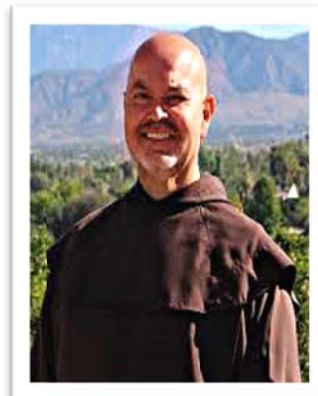
Archbishop Pierre speaks French, English, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

We are very honored that Archbishop Pierre will preside and preach at Mass at St. Thérèse Church on Saturday morning, June 22. He will also be speaking to us after the banquet that evening.



#### **Bishop Gerald R. Barnes**

This year Bishop Barnes celebrates twenty-five years as Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino. Bishop Barnes will preside and preach at Mass on Friday, June 21.



#### **Very Rev. Adam Gregory Gonzales, O.C.D.**

is Provincial Superior of the California-Arizona Province. He will be presiding and preaching at the Thursday, June 20 opening Mass of the Congress.



**Fr. Thomas Reeves, OCD** is Superior of El Carmelo Retreat House in Redlands, California. He will be presiding and preaching at the closing Mass on the Congress on Sunday, June 23.

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## Excursion and Banquet

On Saturday morning, June 22, buses will take us to our Province's beautiful parish of St. Thérèse in Alhambra for Mass with His Excellency Christophe Pierre. Music will be provided by the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles. That same evening at the hotel banquet, Archbishop Pierre will speak to us informally after dinner.

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## Logo

Graphic designer Linae Frei, OCDS designed this impressive logo for our Congress. This is Linae's fourth Congress logo! The flames symbolize gratitude and love setting Carmel ablaze. Linae has been a longtime member of the Phoenix OCDS Community. She has recently moved to Wisconsin. We are very grateful to Linae for sharing her talent with us again.



## **Registration for the Ontario Congress Opens on January 1, 2019.**

**Website and Registration** Our Congress website will be launched on **November 1, 2018**. We will begin accepting registrations on **January 1, 2019**. This information will be sent out through a variety of channels, including our Congress website and the OCDS Provincial website [www.ocds.info](http://www.ocds.info). For our members who do not have the Internet, we will be mailing all this information to all our Communities and Groups. Stay tuned for many exciting announcements as time goes by!

**Great News** Because it can be expensive to attend a Congress, we will be offering Communities and Groups simple, practical ideas about how to raise money for your members to attend. We will also be working for grants and donations to help lower registrations costs for everyone. All this brought excellent results for the San Jose Congress.

For past Congresses, many of our members were able to attend because of partial, or even full, scholarships from their Communities. *Now is the time for your Community to begin taking up a monthly collection for scholarships to the Ontario Congress. Begin your planning now! Make a sacrifice and set aside a little money each week.* “God loves a cheerful giver. God can multiply his favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works” (II Cor 9:7-8).

A Congress is a huge effort by many people, and it all begins with prayer. Please join us in praying every day for the Ontario Congress! We extend a special invitation to our infirm and extended members to pray this prayer with us every day:

### **Congress Prayer**

*Gracious heavenly Father, we ask You to bless us  
as we prepare for our 2019 OCDS Congress in Ontario.  
May we be open to the inspirations of Your Spirit.  
Guide and strengthen us as we work together.  
Help us to overcome any difficulties that come our way.  
May our Congress be a great blessing for us all!  
Through the intercession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,  
may we do whatever we can to “radiate gratitude and love”  
in our world today.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **NOTE: 2018 OCDS Congress**

October 18<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) ~ October 21<sup>st</sup> (Sunday)  
At the *Polaris Hilton, Columbus, OH*  
<http://www.2018ocdscongress.com/>