



CASA GENERALIZIA CARMELITANI SCALZI

Segretariato per l'Ordine Secolare e Istituti Aggregati

Rome, 14 September 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the OCDS,

May this letter find you in the peace and joy of Christ!

During the month of May 2015, the Discalced Carmelite Order will celebrate its *General Chapter* in Avila (Spain). It is envisaged that during the Chapter those attending will be informed about the situation of Secular Carmel throughout the world.

We are aware that the "Carmelite Seculars, together with the Friars and Nuns, are sons and daughters of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus". They are part of "one family with the same spiritual possessions, the same call to holiness and the same apostolic mission" and so "contribute to the Order the benefits proper to their secular state of life". For this reason, the friars "wish to learn from the Secular Carmelites to recognize the signs of the times together with them" (*OCDS Const. 1, 38*). In their interaction with the friars, the ideal is a blend of autonomy and harmonious collaboration, along the lines described in the introduction to the document on *Pastoral Assistance to Secular Carmel*. On the one hand, it is necessary to avoid "excessive independence or excessive dependence on the part of the secular members", and on the other hand, "a lack of interest or a desire to control" on the part of the religious. Another challenge is "the difficulty of forming the lay members of the Order with the maturity and responsibility that the Church and the Order desire", so that they can be witnesses in the world to the spirituality of Carmel.

In the light of the above and setting out from your lay identity (cf. *OCDS Const. 2*), I would like to request your collaboration, asking you to respond clearly and briefly to the questions put below. On the basis of your answers, a report will be presented to the General Chapter.

Every OCDS community is asked to do this, sending the responses to their OCDS Provincial Council *by the 30 November 2014*. They in turn are to synthesize the contributions of the Communities and send their synthesis to the OCDS Secretariat (e-mail: ocd4ocds@gmail.com) *by 15 January 2015*. In anticipation, I express my heartfelt thanks for your kind cooperation.

I ask you to pray, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten the work of the Chapter in its preparation, celebration and implementation. I hope that the celebrations for the Quincentenary of the Birth of St. Teresa may confirm you in your Teresian Carmelite vocation, so that you may be witness to Gospel values in the midst of the world.



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May Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Joseph protect you, your families and your communities.

Yours fraternally,

Fr. Alzinir Francisco Debastiani OCD
General Delegate for the OCDS

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- 1) The witness of fraternal communion is a “light that attracts” and evangelizes (Cf.: EG 100). How are *fraternal relations* between the members of your Community and the three expressions of the one Order (Friars, Nuns, Seculars) in your Area or Province?
 - 2) How would you access the formation you received in your Community? Have you any suggestions to make that would improve it, so that the members of the OCDS may be enabled to live more fully their lay Carmelite identity and vocation and contribute more to evangelization in the family, at work and in the social world?
 - 3) Give some examples of the more significant and specifically *apostolic works* carried out (individually or communally) by the Seculars in your Community.
 - 4) What means do you use to make the OCDS known and to promote vocations?
 - 5) What do you think of setting up an *OCDS International Council* as a consultative body? How should it be organized?
 - 6) What would you like to say or suggest to the friars who will be attending the upcoming General Chapter in the light of the challenges of today’s world and the *urgent need for evangelization* (“signs of the times”) as evidenced in your country?

NB: As the year commemorating the Quincentenary of the Birth of St. Teresa is almost upon us (15 October 2014-2015), I take the opportunity of reminding you of the possibility of participating in the *International meeting of the Teresian Carmelite family* at Avila from the 10 – 14 August 2015. It is one of the central celebrative events of the Order for this Quincentenary.

The programme and other information may be found on the web site: www.avila2015.com (e-mail of the secretary: etiavila2015@gmail.com) and from the OCD Provincials.