

Flos Carmeli

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Summer 2021

Volume XXXI No. 3

From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Carmel,

Greetings to all! We are happy to learn that many communities are beginning to meet in person again. We have sorely missed the special interaction that cannot be achieved with phone calls and social media. Many of us have come to better appreciate that special time set aside each month for our community meetings – a shared time for prayer, learning, and socializing.

The OCDS Provincial Council is very pleased to announce that we have scheduled a **Mini-Congress** via Zoom for Saturday, October 30, 2021 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm CST. It is a celebration of renewal and reconnection with members and communities. Details regarding registration and program highlights will be sent to communities by August 1. (Please refer to page 2)

The Provincial Council has been involved in completing visitations, planning for the Mini-Congress, and reviewing and revising Provincial policies and norms. We are particularly excited about planning for a series of presentations on a variety of topics related to community development and growth.

Included in this issue is a May 24, 2021 letter to the Secular Order from Father Saverio Cannistrà OCD, Superior General. We encourage communities, perhaps as part of Community Formation, read and discuss the letter together.

Please pray for the success of the 92nd General Chapter of Discalced Carmelites to be held in Rome from August 30 – September 14. A General Chapter is held every six years and is attended by friars who are provincial superiors of provinces or semi-provinces as well as other specified delegates. Our own Provincial, Father Luis Joaquin Castañeda, will be attending.

Question and Answer

Q. We already have a Spiritual Assistant. Do we have to reapply for his approval?

A. Yes. Our Provincial Policy requires the appointment or reappointment of Spiritual Assistants in each triennium. The policy is based on the Constitutions and the document, *The Pastoral Care of the Secular Order*. (See Policy and Request Form at www.thereseocds.org).



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From the President's Desk

By Anna Peterson, OCDS—President of the Provincial Council

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Q. Is it too late to apply for this triennium 2020-23?

A. **Absolutely not!** Please submit your community's application for appointment/reappointment.

Yours in Carmel,

Anna Peterson, OCDS

**President, Provincial Council
for the OCDS Oklahoma Semi-Province**

Council Members:

Barbara Basgall, OCDS, Mark Calvert, OCDS,

Maxine Latiolais, OCDS and Jillison Parks, OCDS

*In this house, all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped.
(Holy Mother, St. Teresa of Jesus)*



Report from Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Carmel,

I feel compelled to write this short article on ‘confidentiality’ because of things that have come to my attention and things that I have myself experienced.



†
Memorare

Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary, that
never was it known that anyone
who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought
thine intercession was left
unaided.

Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of
virgins, my mother; to thee do I
come, before thee I stand, sinful
and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word
Incarnate, despise not my
petitions, but in thy mercy hear
and answer me. Amen.

Firstly, I would like to point to the Code of Canon Law (220) that states: “No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy.” Within the OCDS Statutes, Section VIII: Community Life, the first quote is: “Concern for the needs and good of others in the community is a principle of our Rule that guides our Carmelite life.”

Secondly, the breaking of any confidence of a Council Meeting is a serious offense and there are sanctions within religious life that can and should be taken against the offender.

In a culture that is too quick to share more than is necessary, many times there is what therapists call ‘inappropriate disclosure’ and because of this frequent occurrence and maybe even because of the ‘tell-all’ ‘reality-type’ shows, there has been a lack of discretion in many situations. Even though the lack of discretion has not been malicious, it is detrimental to communities and interpersonal relationships. It is a breaking of trust and once trust is broken it is very difficult to regain, if ever.

Sometimes the person ‘needs’ to tell someone because of their malformed thinking or some insecurity or wound they bear. There are many possible motives for this type of indiscretion: they may believe that by sharing something ‘confidential’ they seem ‘more important’ (pride or vainglory); a puerile manifestation of the ‘I know something you don’t know’ game (psychological and spiritual immaturity); it could be that by sharing some confidence they are manifesting some sort of power; it could be that the only way they can ‘relate’ to others is through gossip (triangulating); there may be a host of other motives, but none of them are acceptable.

Within the OCDS, things that are discussed within the Local Council are meant to be kept strictly within the Council. The Local Council may come to a decision based on information that is to be kept confidential and the community must respect that confidentiality. The Council has been elected as the legitimate governing authority of the local community and therefore has been entrusted to make these discernments and decisions. It is damaging to

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Report from Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD

Oklahoma Semi-Province of St. Thérèse

the community if confidences are broken or, worse yet, if members attempt to discover ‘what was said and who said it’ in matters that have been entrusted to the Local Council by the community through the election process.

Some may use the argument that it is only out of ‘concern for the good and needs of others’ as a motive for either breaking confidentiality or seeking information that is not deemed to be meant for public consumption. So, in matters of elections, the candidates must have this quality of discretion and ability to separate Local Council business and discernment from their interpersonal relationships with the rest of the members.

This indiscretion goes against some of the primary values of the OCDS: ‘arming ourselves with the practice of virtues’; ‘using prudent discretion in all that we do.’ Indiscretion and gossip are not virtues, but a manifestation of a lack of both human and spiritual formation.

in Him,

Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD
Provincial Delegate to the OCDS

**News from the Province—National Shrine and Basilica
of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse, San Antonio, Texas**
Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD—Explanation of Image #3—John of the Cross and Teresa of Jesus

Explanation of the Artwork by Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD



As you enter the National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse in San Antonio, Texas, you will see on your left, stained glass windows by Emil Frei depicting various events in the life of our Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus. On the right you will see stained glass windows depicting various events in the life of our Holy Father St. John of the Cross. All along the bottom of the major windows you will see a procession of nuns on the left and friars on the right, all carrying religious symbols in their hands as they process towards the main altar.

As you enter the Basilica, this window is found on the right side. On the top right of the window, you see our Holy Father celebrating his first Eucharist as a priest (1567). He is standing behind

the Communion rail and is giving Communion to a couple that some conjecture represents his older brother Francisco, who John loved and considered his greatest treasure, and his wife Ana Izquierdo.

In the upper left corner, we see a rugged mountain – this represents not only Mount Carmel but also the work of our Holy Father – The Ascent of Mount Carmel.

In the lower left we see both Teresa and John standing on a mountain top – this represents not only the top of Mount Carmel but also that they are considered without peers in matters spiritual.

In the lower right of the window, we have the outlines of a Spanish town important in the life of our Holy Father – it either represents Segovia, where he built the monastery of the friars, or Ubeda – the city where he died.

A Time to Step Aside

An article by Barbara Basgall, Provincial Councilor

We have all known people with great leadership skills. When reviewing articles on what makes a good leader, these people possess most of these qualities. However, many of these articles fail to mention or only touch the surface of one of the required traits needed in a good leader — this is the ability to step aside when one's leadership role is finished and not interfere with the new leadership. This quality is a **requirement**, because if one cannot step aside, one may do irreparable harm to the authority of the new council and one's community. The ability to walk away is an indication that one possesses other core qualities of a good leader, such as love, detachment, and humility. Do these virtues sound familiar?

A successful leader has a love for each member, the community, and the Order. This love is not superficial, but the kind of love referred to by St. Thomas Aquinas as wanting the best for the other person. This love requires one to let go and have faith that the Holy Spirit is working through this new council. It must be realized that this council has certain gifts and talents that may be needed for this community at this time. The Holy Spirit has placed the individual members of the council in this position, here and now. The council will undoubtedly make mistakes; hopefully, these will not be costly mistakes. If one loves their community, their council, let go and let the Holy Spirit work through the council for the good of the community. One's support of the council will reflect one's love. This brings up a concern. When I hear a member complain about their council, the first question I ask is, "Are you praying for your council?" One should pray daily for the Holy Spirit to guide the council and to provide them with the virtues needed for their positions. If I may suggest to also add the Provincial Council, Father Provincial, and the Provincial Delegate, in one's prayers. *And the list goes on...*

The second core quality of a good leader is detachment. If one cannot step aside and relinquish control to the authority of the new council, one needs to examine oneself and determine the reason why. Just possibly having some authority feeds one's ego, and one needs to learn humility. This might be the thread or the anchor weighing one down from progressing in one's prayer life. If one has this need to take control, they should consider speaking to their spiritual director on ways to overcome this attachment. Sometimes leaders, whether in office or out of office, have tendencies to hover over the community and/or certain members like a parent that excessively hovers over their child leaving no room for independent growth and development of talents. Individuals need the space to develop their leadership skills and talents. If a particular member is controlling and fails to delegate, members will not come forward to volunteer and the community will suffer. One or two people cannot do everything. To have a good community takes the work of the entire community.

Humility is the virtue we will work on throughout our lives. To be humble is to accept the workings of the new authority of the community without grumbling or exclaiming that one way is better than another. Obedience is the true marker of humility — acceptance without complaining and in complete surrender to God's will. Humility means admitting there may be someone better suited for the job and requires someone else to take a more passive role in the community. Lynn Miyake in recalling St. Teresa's words on humility states that "Humility is the main practice, and it embraces both love and detachment."¹¹ Even though an individual is no longer in a leadership position, they must continue to have the "attitude of a humble servant"²¹ but more subtly and passively.

How does one maintain the attitude of a humble servant while stepping aside from leadership? How does a natural leader stop leading? They don't actually stop leading. Their leadership takes on a different form, a more passive and silent leadership. Fr. Deeney states that "when we're no longer the leader, we go back to being a cooperative."³¹ We cooperate with the new council by showing them support. If the previous leader is well respected and admired by the members, they must be active in their support of the council, so this cooperation is witnessed by the whole community. If they are critical of the new leadership, the whole community will be critical and now the council has been sabotaged. It will be difficult or almost impossible for the council to gain the necessary respect required for their authority.

The following are some examples of how stepping aside can manifest itself.

1. A highly respected member of the community continues to interrupt the President during the business meeting. First, if this is a correction to something the President said that is serious, the President should thank the person and move on. If it is a trivial correction, the President should speak with the person

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A Time to Step Aside

An article by Barbara Basgall, OCDS, Provincial Councilor

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- privately after the meeting. This kind of behavior is annoying, disrespectful, and harms the authority of the President.
2. You are asked your advice on how something should be handled. If this is a community matter refer them to their council. If you can answer the question by referring them to the appropriate Article or Statute in the Legislation, this will allow the individual to arrive at the answer on their own.
 3. There are disagreements on how the council should function. You must remind the council members or other members to talk to the President. There are also plenty of resources on the OCDS Provincial website for help in running an effective council.
 4. The new council makes some progressive changes to the program. Members come and complain about it. You agree with the members and do not understand why changes had to be made. Probably the first way to handle this is to not voice your opinion. Your opinion carries a lot of weight in the community. Tell the members to go to the President and ask to speak with the council. The President will set a time to speak with the council. The members should charitably ask about the formation program and give examples of why they are unhappy with the change. If these changes are substantive the council should take their concerns to prayer. If the displeasure is only because the members do not like change, they may have to learn to detach and understand that the council is doing what they think is best for the community.

Try to discourage members from running to you when they have complaints, questions, or concerns. Encourage them to go to their council.

We have all been guilty of telling someone, “Well, we use to do it like this!” We need to make sure we are not fostering unwarranted concerns and learn to accept changes. God just might be leading this council to make some changes. Do we really want to interfere with God’s plan? We get set in our old ways. We may need a change to help us advance spiritually. We must be cautious that our advice and/or criticism is not an underlying problem with wanting to be in control.

Some times being passive in one’s cooperation with the new council may not be prudent. If one has identified a possible problem that can damage the community, that person has an obligation to go to the council with the problem. Understandably going before the council may put this person in a precarious position. As a past leader, you do not want to come across as meddlesome. Always approach the council with humility and love. This may reduce any resentment they may feel toward you as possibly interfering with council business. If the problem is not rectified, please call your Provincial Council visitor and make them aware of the problem.

Don’t forget that there are some wonderful articles on Leadership on the OCDS Provincial Website under Best Practices. See <http://www.thereocds.org/>

^[1] Miyake, Lynn, OCDS, The Spirituality of Carmelite Leadership (And Group Dynamics among Council Members), pg.6

^[2] Ibid

^[3] Deeney, Aloysius, OCD, General Delegate, 2007, Responsible Leadership and Collaboration in Light of the Constitutions, pg. 7

News from the Province — Our Lady of Mount Carmel & St. Thérèse San Antonio Community Celebrates 65th Anniversary!

The members of the San Antonio OCDS Community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Thérèse had much to celebrate at their meeting on June 13, 2021. The community marked its 65th Anniversary as a canonical community

It was their first face-to-face meeting since March 2020. Cynthia Frater (pictured with Fr. Gregory Ross) made her First Promise during the Sunday noon Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower.

The Community minutes from May 27, 1956, reported eight professed members and eight novices present for that special day of canonical erection. The current membership now includes 39 Definitely Professed members, eight in Formation 2, and eleven in Formation 1.



News from the Province—St. John of the Cross and St. Paul the Apostle, Birmingham, Alabama

Submitted by Sylvia Bresowar, OCDS



FIRST PROMISE

On January 9, 2021, Julia Wortham, OCDS, made her First Promise during the January meeting with Rev. Fr. Frankline Fomukong, our Spiritual Assistant, presiding.



FIRST PROMISE

Susan Vogel, OCDS, made her First Promise on February 16, 2021, at her home. Rev. Patrick Egan, O.S.B. presided over the Ritual with both Sylvia Bresowar, OCDS, (pictured standing) and Susy Stokes, OCDS, (was present, but not pictured).

News from the Province—St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Submitted by Teresa Sweedyk, OCDS



DEFINITIVE PROMISE

Ronda Williamson, Msgr. Gregory Gier, Spiritual Assistant, and Coral Calvin (left to right)



FIRST PROMISE

Ursula Kinzer, Msgr. Gier, Holly Davidson, and Kristi Bell (left to right)



CLOTHING

Michelle Steanson with Msgr. Gier

News from the Province—Triumph of the Cross, Georgetown, Texas

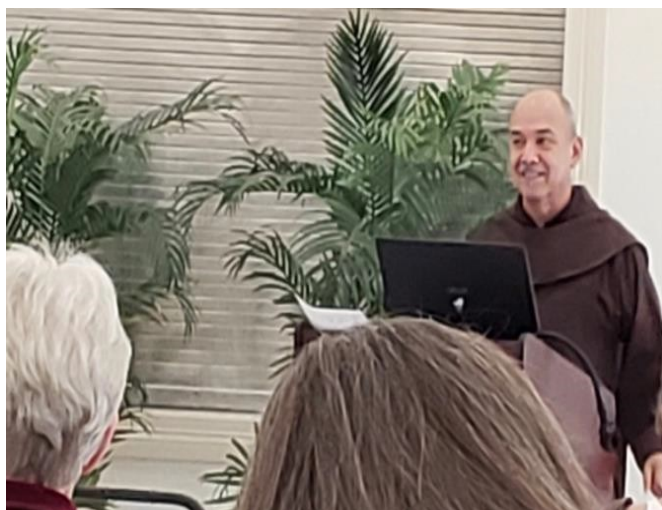
Submitted by Ginny Hahn, OCDS

On Saturday, January 9, 2021, Shannon Haase and Anita Eubanks, aspirants in the Georgetown Community of the Triumph of the Cross, were clothed with the scapular of the Order. Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD, Provincial Delegate for the Oklahoma Province, presided at the ceremony, which was held during Morning Prayer at Santa Rosa de Lima Catholic Church, Andice, Texas.

After Mass, Father Stephen led our Day of Reflection with the theme, “The Gift of Self, the Roots of the Discalced Carmelite Reform and What it is Our Holy Mother Desires for Us From her Work.” Father said “the vocation of the Discalced Carmelite is to give oneself completely, courageously, and without measure. With the ‘call’ to be Discalced, there is also the essential call to be community-minded; to be of community. This gift of the ‘self’ then is given in and through communal life. Not according to my wishes, style, or apart from the community – but according to the style that Saint Teresa has set down for us as her children, each branch according to its call.”



Anita Eubanks and Shannon Haase



Fr. Stephen Sánchez, OCD



SEMINARIAN FOR DIOCESE OF TULSA INFLUENCED BY CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

Josh Votruba, a seminarian ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 2021, was interviewed by the *Eastern Oklahoma Catholic*, the diocesan paper for the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

What areas of spirituality and theology have had the greatest impact on your formation?

Easily, the greatest impact on my formation has been Carmelite spirituality. My favorite class in seminary was The Spirituality of Teresa of Avila. She spoke so much to me that it helped clarify my spirituality and enter into it more deeply. In particular, Teresa of Avila emphasizes three virtues: love of neighbor, humility, and detachment. These three virtues were already important to me, but now they have become an essential part of my spirituality.

How do you plan to continue your theological and spiritual formation once you enter ministry?

I am discerning whether to become a Secular Carmelite in Tulsa. This means I would remain a diocesan priest but belong to a dedicated group connected to the Carmelite Order. This would allow me to continue to nourish that special part of my spirituality while serving the people of Tulsa. A further element of this would include the advanced study of Carmelite Spirituality.

Do you have a devotion to a particular saint? Certain prayers or devotions? Why?

I have a deep devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. There have been several occasions where I felt like Our Lady of Mount Carmel has called me. When I taught Totus Tuus in 2015, I decided to do the consecration to Mary. I chose a random date to do my consecration, and it ended up being on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16. After that, I had come to realize that for years I had been wearing the brown scapular because it was given to me by the Dead Theologian Society group at St. Benedict. I wore it, not really knowing what it was. Also, during my last year of college seminary, I had to find a new spiritual director because my previous one was no longer available. I had no clue who I would ask. Over the summer, I got an email from the rector asking me if I would like to take Father Sanchez as my spiritual director. He was a Carmelite. A Carmelite spiritual director was literally handed to me. After college seminary, I was sent to study at St. Meinrad. The Benedictines at St. Meinrad originate from the community in Einsiedeln, Switzerland. I came to find out that Our Lady of Einsiedeln shares the same feast day as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I do not think that it was coincidental that I was sent to St. Meinrad to study theology. During all of this, I have had several encounters with the secular order of Carmelites in Tulsa. All this, plus my studies in Carmelite history and spirituality, have led to my deep devotion to the Carmelites.



SUPERIOR GENERAL OF DISCALCED CARMELITES
Corso d'Italia, 38
00198 Roma – Italia

*...Straining ahead for what is still to come, we are
racing for the future,
for the prize to which God calls us upwards
to receive in Christ Jesus
(Phil 3,13-14)*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Order,

We have come to the conclusion of the sexennium 2015-2021, six years marked by joys, tribulations and so much hope. Now, on the threshold of our General Chapter, I want to thank the Lord for everything He has allowed us to experience and achieve, but also to thank each of you as you supported us with your prayer and solidarity. At the same time, I would like this letter to express my prayerful and affectionate closeness to all those who are sick and who have lost family members and friends during the pandemic or are suffering from situations caused by it. May the Lord strengthen and support you with His grace and faithful love.

1. In my letters to you during the past six years I have sought to underline various aspects of your OCDS life that I consider essential. I recall some of them here to keep our memories alive and avoid a characteristic flaw of our times, which Pope Francis refers to as “a growing loss of the sense of history, which leads to even further breakup” (Cf. *Fratelli tutti* [=FT] 13-14).

The OCDS letter in 2016 presented a report of the suggestions sent from the various Provinces as a contribution to the reflections of the 2015 General Chapter. They referred to the possibility of establishing an international Council of OCDS, further development in formation in the Teresian Carmelite charisma and an improvement in communications between OCDS and the Friars and Nuns. These are still valid suggestions and continue as on-going projects for the future. In 2017, we reflected on the manifold possible expressions of the mission of secular Carmelites. Mission is an essential factor in the OCDS vocation and is first and foremost the right and duty of every baptised and confirmed Christian. We note the necessity of a greater and more active collaboration of our secular members with the Friars and Nuns of the Order, where this is possible. According to his/her personal vocation everyone is called to promote the spiritual life as friendship with the Lord and this is manifested in specific works for the good of others. Then in 2018, I dealt with some particular aspects

of the identity of OCDS members. I made specific reference to the necessity of prayer and silence, being aware of the Lord dwelling within us (cf. *The Way of Perfection* 28,8-10) and overcoming the temptation of being satisfied with a sterile superficiality, exposed to mundane conditioning. The following year I insisted on the role of local and provincial Councils. It is in these that the vitality of the community/province becomes evident, in regard to fraternal care, formation and missionary witness. Insofar as I have been able to ascertain during this period of the pandemic, many provincial Councils have organised congresses and meetings on formation and prayer on line. Despite their limitations, these have proved invaluable in supporting and accompanying the members of their communities.

Lastly, in 2020 I recalled the 50th anniversary of the Doctorate of our Holy Mother Teresa and the 20th anniversary of the II international Congress of OCDS, referring to certain achievements but also pointing out the challenges that had still to be confronted in various provinces. This was a year marked by the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic. The upsets we have had and are still going through have allowed us to experience our extreme impotence and fragility. Let us grasp it as a precious opportunity of learning to adopt an attitude of humble and trusting hope in God's infinite love, certain that "His mercy is everlasting" (Psalm 136).

2. With regard to the general situation of the Secular Order, I report the following statistics (updated to 6 May 2021). The total number of members with promises (temporary and definitive) is 28.824, present in 92 countries. There are 775 canonically erected communities with an additional 341 groups or communities of formation. 97 communities have been canonically erected during the past six years. These are very significant data, not only registering the numerical increase of OCDS, but even more importantly, underlining its vitality and effectiveness.

3. I also wish to refer to some worries and perplexities regarding certain attitudes that are surfacing here and there among some members of OCDS. Particularly I refer to the emergence of polarizations and radicalizations. It appears that some characteristics of today's world have begun to penetrate our ranks. Pope Francis called them particularisms, populisms and fundamentalisms. If these are fostered "ancient conflicts thought long buried break out anew... myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive..." (FT 11). They are signs of selfish individualism, masked as zeal for some forms of apparent orthodoxy. In practice, these attitudes manifest themselves as support for polemical personalities in the Church, not fully in agreement with the Second Vatican Council, remaining doggedly attached to a Church that is definitively outdated. Unfortunately such attitudes and conduct create conflict and useless divisions and become a counter-witness to the expressed will of Jesus that His disciples be united in love and truth (Cf. John 15,17; 17,23). St. Teresa has already warned us of

the risks of “indiscreet zeal” (1 *Mansions* 2,17) that damage communities so much and dampen and diminish charity. Today we are called to build communities that demonstrate the Good Samaritan’s concern for the world, shown by gratuitousness (cf. FT 139), by tenderness (cf. FT 194) and by the art of encounter (cf. FT 215). True fraternal relationships bear the seal of respect and of behavioural traits such as “approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word ‘dialogue’ ” (FT 198).

Another problem can arise from the harmful use of social networks if they diffuse disrespectful and false news about the magisterium (Church and Bishops), or slander the good name of others. I ask myself if anyone behaving in this way can really be part of our Order and a true child of our Holy Mother Teresa. We must make use of these modern facilities with prudence and in an effort to build bridges. If there is need of discussion, let us do so in a search for truth, without ever being lacking in respect or love. We should be constantly mindful of St. Paul’s lesson: “Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together” (Ep 4,3).

A further worry would be the tendency in some circumscriptions to revert to clericalism or passive submission of lay persons in the ranks of OCDS. The relationship that we want to establish between OCDS and our Religious is one of collaboration and mutual respect of their legitimate autonomies. With regard to the Secular Order, you must remember that you have autonomy for your government, for your formation and for the organization of your activities, in accordance with the norms approved by the competent authority. We must not take backward steps in time. This would mean not being attentive to what the Spirit is asking of us today. We are called to journey together (*syn-odos*) as pilgrim people of God in history, recognizing that we complement each other in our vocation in the service of the same charism. Your lay vocation implies a dedication to building up the Kingdom in the midst of the world (cf. LG 31-32; ChL 15).

4. In conclusion, I would like to leave you with some thoughts for reflection on how you might persevere with dynamic fidelity on your journey in collaboration with the other branches of the Order and the Teresian Carmelite family. All of us, in fact, are called “to be mission” in a world that keeps changing and suffering, while garnering our strength from our relationship of friendship with the Lord. This will be possible if you confront your troubles and difficulties from within, finding light in that faith that never forgets God’s fidelity throughout the course of history. In this sense, “the believer is fundamentally one who remembers” (EG 13). We are immersed in a digital ambience where our inner selves are at constant risk of being inundated with waves of information and images that do not concern us and that only leave us with superficialities. Hence, our urgent need of rediscovering those spiritual dispositions outlined in our Rule. This is especially true in regard to meditation on the Word

of God instructing us to safeguard our memory and keep our hope alive, constantly renewing our covenant with God in Christ.

This was the example set by Sts. Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross during their lifetimes: although immersed in the current problems of the Church and of the Order, their hearts were always fixed on their Trinitarian fatherland. Like them, in a humble and trusting relationship with the Lord, we must seek to find the inspiration and strength to work in the service of the Church and our Order. Again, like them, we must journey and work together. Teresa sought allies among religious and lay people who would assist her progress in making foundations according to the charism she had received. In this way, it is essential that every member of our Order feels co-responsible for that area of the Church to which he/she belongs, as well as building up their own Carmelite community with active and mature involvement.

All this calls for an openness to and docile acceptance of formation. We must be trained especially with a view to achieving a theological perspective on life, in a concrete faith that is open to hope and to “expressing itself in love” (Gal 5,6), a faith like that of Mary and Joseph, centred on the Word of God becoming incarnate in our daily necessities. An integral part of such formation is an assimilation of the writings of our Saints from the point of view of a lay vocation.

May the light shining from the Risen Crucified illumine your lives and hearts so that you can live in its fullness your vocation and your mission in the Church and world of today. May you be sustained especially by the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church and by St. Joseph her spouse, Patron of the whole Church and the “most generous Protector” of our Order.

May the Lord bless and protect your families and your communities!

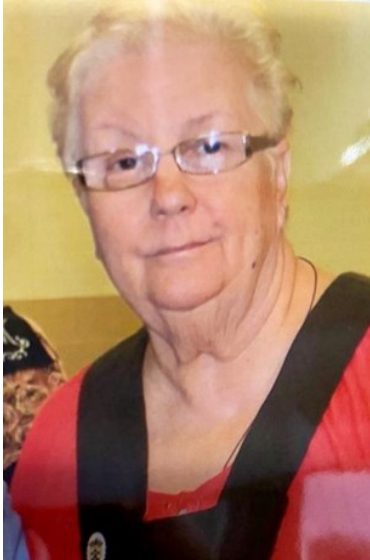
Fraternally in Carmel,



Fr. Saverio Cannistrà
Fr. Saverio Cannistrà, OCD
Superior General

Rome, May 24, 2021 - Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Carmelite Obituaries



Lucia (Lucy) Dominguez, OCDS
Community of St. Mariam of Jesus Crucified

McAllen, Texas

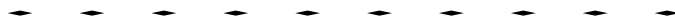
Submitted by Iris Rodriguez, OCDS

May 3, 1946—April 11, 2021

Lucy was one of the original members of St. Mariam of Jesus Crucified Community in McAllen, Texas when under the guidance of Fr. Sam Anthony Morello the community became canonically erected.

In 1987 she found a pamphlet about the Secular Discalced Carmelite Order at Sacred Heart Church, McAllen. She wrote to the Order in Little Rock, Arkansas, and was assigned a formator to begin her studies. In 1990, she made her Temporary promise as an Isolate.

Lucy felt a strong desire to bring the Secular Discalced Carmelite Order to the Rio Grande Valley. She was involved in many parish ministries at Holy Spirit Parish in McAllen including leading a scripture study group. Two other church members also started their formation process as Isolates. When Lucy finished formation towards her definitive promise, she inquired on how to start an OCDS group. She contacted Fr. Morello to help begin the process, and he instructed her on how to structure the meetings. In 2000, Lucy told Fr. Morello that she felt the group needed stronger guidance and structure. Lucy was appointed president by Fr. Morello and the community became a study group. Lucy helped guide the community from its infancy stages to its status as a study group until it was canonically erected on December 8, 2008.



Concepcion L. Chacon, OCDS
Cameron County Carmelites,
Group in Discernment

Harlingen, Texas

Submitted by Maggie Flores, OCDS

Concepcion I. Chacon (Connie) age 74 went to be with our Lord April 11, 2021. Connie was a member of the Cameron County Discalced Carmelites Seculars, a group in Harlingen, Texas under the guidance of the St. Miriam of Jesus Crucified Community in McAllen, Texas. She was clothed in Carmel on September 9, 2012. Connie was definitively professed on September 10, 2017. She served as a formator. She was active in multiple ministries as a member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in La Feria, Texas. She volunteered as a chaplain at Harlingen Medical Center.



Carmelite Obituaries



Diana Louise Nesbitt, OCDS

Community of St. John of the Cross and St. Paul the Apostle
Birmingham, Alabama

Submitted by Sylvia Bresowar, OCDS

July 24, 1945 ~ April 24, 2021

On April 24, 2021 at the age of 75, Diana Louise Nesbitt went to her eternal resting place.

She was born in San Francisco, California on July 24, 1945. She married Sidney Nesbitt and they spent nearly 60 years together building a life and family together.

Diana was an original member of the Birmingham OCDS Community of St. John of the Cross and St. Paul the Apostle for 40 years. She was clothed on November 6, 1984 and made her Definitive Promise on October 4, 1987. Living out her vocation to prayer and service in Carmel, throughout the years Diana served as president, council member, secretary, treasurer, librarian, and historian.

A memorial Mass was held in her memory on Monday, May 3, 2021 at St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Bessemer, Alabama.



Ernest Mendoza, OCDS

Community of San Juan de la Cruz
Houston 2 Community

Submitted by Denise Graham, OCDS

June 29, 1943—February 3, 2021

Ernest will be remembered by his love for God, his family, and for others. He was a member of Holy Name Catholic Church and was involved in many organizations.

He will be remembered for his devotion to the Order of Carmel. He chose the name "Ernest of St. Joseph" when he professed his first promise as a Secular Carmelite. Ernest was one of the original community members of San Juan de la Cruz Community of Houston. Ernest led the community as President and through formation of new members. His contact with other Carmel communities around the world brought many prayers and news from other Carmelite convents and OCDS communities.

Ernest instilled the gift of faith upon each one of his family members and is known for saying, "The family that prays together stays together." He has influenced the faith of many people and will be missed for his wise teachings and fearless love for God.



Carmelite Obituaries



Rose Thibeaux Mouton, OCDS
Community of Mary, Mother of Grace
Lafayette, LA

Submitted by Jeannine Meaux, OCDS

September 3, 1926 - June 1, 2021

Rose Thibeaux Mouton died on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at her home after spending the day visiting with family and friends. She was a member of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, Lafayette, LA, and was a Discalced Secular Carmelite Member for over 45 years. Both Rose and her husband, Joseph Warren, were OCDS members, both professing their Definitive Promise on August 15, 1976 (45 years). Rose was preceded in death by her husband (Her husband was deceased September 22, 1980). She was affectionately called Nanny by her family and the children who she cared for. Nanny spent over 55 years taking care of children in her home.



Mary Carol Cavanaugh, OCDS

Community of St. Paul the Apostle and St. John of the Cross
Birmingham, Alabama

Submitted by Sylvia Bresowar, OCDS

February 12, 1933—June 10, 2021—Age 88

Mary was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 12, 1933.

Mary loved life and knew as a child that God had a special call for her. She taught First through Eighth grade and worked with the Olympic Games for the Disabled.

Mary made her Definitive Promise in the Birmingham OCDS Community, October 3, 1993, and took the devotional name, Mary of the Trinity. She was an original member and was with the community for 31 years. Mary served as Sacristan and the Divine Office Coordinator over the years and was always helping where needed. She loved to lead us in song.

Mary's Mass of Christian Burial was June 18, 2021, at Blessed Sacrament Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Parting Words

Flos Carmeli provides information for the Secular members of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in the Oklahoma Semi-Province, which has jurisdiction over OCDS members living in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas.

Oklahoma Semi-Province members wishing to submit articles for publication in the *Flos Carmeli* or for subscription information, please contact Maxine Latiolais, Provincial Council *Flos Carmeli* coordinator, at flos.submit@gmail.com

The submission due dates for articles are:

January 1
April 1
July 1
October 1

Any OCDS member submitting an article must include their name, community name and location in the article.

**“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.”**

(Luke 1: 37)”



Getting the *Flos Carmeli* to members

Community presidents, please remember that the Province no longer mails out copies of the Flos Carmeli to communities. It is the community's responsibility to get a copy to each of your members, either via email or by print. This includes all isolate, aged, or infirm members. Thank you!

Provincial Council for the 2020-2023 Triennium:

Anna Peterson, San Antonio, TX, President

Barbara A. Basgall, Oklahoma City, OK

Mark Calvert, Knoxville, TN

Maxine Latiolais, New Iberia, LA

Jillison Parks, Savannah, GA