

EXTRAORDINARY DEFINITORY, SANTIAGO, CHILE
4th – 12th October 2005

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Luis Arostegui, Sup. General

One of the goals of an Extraordinary Definitory (as it is for a Plenary Council or a Provincial Assembly) is to communicate to you the state of the Order, in so doing it aims to promote the unity of the Order. Now you know that it is impossible to give an idea of the state of the Order, in its entirety, as you can in your messages and reports, for example, to your Provincial Chapter. This communication is a look at certain points that are generally considered important, at least from the point of view of the General Government and which must presume that other situations are well known.

1. 2004 Statistics

a) Where there is growth, or new beginnings (regions)

In East Asia-Oceania, in general. In India, in an outstanding way and also, but more modestly, in Korea, Indonesia and lastly in the Philippines.

In Africa, there has been a significant rather than a huge growth, taking place in the different regions where our mission has begun.

In Latin America there has been little growth, but figures are stable. Without doubt, this is positive, not only in itself but also from a statistical point of view, where some Provinces have been strengthened.

We should also underline the growth in Eastern Europe: besides Poland now comprising two Provinces, we have the promising fact of slowly advancing into Byelorussia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, beginnings in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

b) Where there is a decrease

In Western and Central Europe. And yet Europe represents the area with the most numbers, allowing for great differentials. There is a clear and continuous decrease, due to the disproportionate number of elderly and the shortage of new vocations. It is significant that between 2003 and 2004 the region lost 100 members. But on the other hand we have some Provinces that give us cause for hope, and can serve as examples to others.

In the United States and Canada there is stability but numbers are slowly decreasing.

In the Middle East numbers have remained the same but, as you will see, they depend a lot on religious from other regions.

Therefore our total numbers have remained almost the same in recent times, as numbers go up in some regions but come down in others.

2. Expansion

a) Promotion of vocations: The first meeting of the sexennium, organized by the Definitory, was for the European promoters of vocations. This because of the particular situation for vocations in this continent.

The criterion of the General Definitory, in its pastoral and other visitations, is to insist on good promotion of vocations, which the Visitor leaves as a concrete resolution.

b) *New Status of circumscriptions*: there has been the erection of two Provinces in Brazil approved by the General Chapter; then the Definitory has established the Commissariat of Delhi (Punjab), the Commissariat of Andhra Pradesh, the General Delegation of Argentina and has given new status to the General Delegation of Congo-Kinshasa.

c) *New territories*: Preparations are under way for a foundation in Latvia and Lithuania, and the first steps have been taken for future foundations in Burma (Myanmar), Sri Lanka and China. The Commissariat of the Philippines has taken on Vietnam as a mission, and has designated one of the Friars to accompany vocations from that country; already there are four simply professed Vietnamese in the Philippines.

3. Animation: Communion and Formation

The expansion of the Order is a much appreciated gift; it is also a sign of our relevance and vitality. In fact, we all presume that the expansion is authentic when it enhances life. For this reason, we would like to place ourselves at the service of Communion and Formation.

The means for enhancing our lives are known, but I would just like to mention them briefly:

a) *Pastoral and Fraternal Visitations*, are first. It was decided that these should take place during the first three years, or at least as soon as possible, so that afterwards the General Government could maintain regular contact with the Provinces.

The presidency of the General and the Definitors at the Provincial Chapters encourages the communion of the Order.

Likewise, the presence, in different regions, of the Secretary for the Missions and the General Delegate for the OCDS helps to strengthen communion.

b) *Meetings*. We thought that the meetings on the two themes of communion and formation would be better on a regional level, as the more localized meetings, besides being more real, the more in touch they would be with their situation, and be more relevant and above all more effective. We have in mind the following meetings:

- *On Formation*. We would like to have two in the sexennium, given its importance, and the need for continuity and the deepening of our awareness of this concrete theme. The first meeting has already taken place: in Europe, French-speaking Africa, India, and will take place immediately in Latin America, and later in East Asia.

- *For Publishing Houses*. We have decided to have a meeting of Publishers from the whole Order, with the aim of improving collaboration. It is being prepared and will take place in 2006.

- *On Prayer and Liturgy*, as part of our on-going formation, recalling our past history so as to rekindle our spiritual lives today; these meetings, to be held on a regional level, are at the first stage of preparation and will take place in 2007.

- *For Missionary Coordinators*, in Europe. This is being prepared for January 2007. We hope also to have a meeting of the missionary coordinators from the circumscriptions of India and East Asia.

- *For the Historians of the Order*, to find out the state of our historical research and animate and coordinate research and publications. This will be for the entire Order and has been provisionally set for sometime in 2007.

- *For Editors of our Reviews and Other means of communication*. This is still in the process of being organized and will depend on the response shown by those involved.

4. Collaboration

Collaboration, naturally, is the continuation of what has been done before. But it is encouraging to fix one's sight on some positive facts that can stimulate our imagination.

Regular meetings between the circumscriptions of **East Asia** for the purpose of mutual organization.

In concrete the Philippines has offered itself as a Centre of theological formation for East Asia.

India: Joint meetings are promoted for study and for formation. Also the students themselves asked for these meetings during the two pastoral visits.

Latin America: Besides the example of the collaboration in the entire region with congresses and meetings, the collaboration of Columbia in helping first Peru and now Argentina is also an example, where earlier Argentineans, Spanish and Polish already collaborated. Also Mexico and Columbia have sent young religious for future service in the Holy Land-Egypt.

Europe: From the time when the two Polish Provinces were formed, religious from the two Provinces have collaborated by going to the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and now to Siberia. Polish religious are in Germany and the Krakow Province helps out in Hungary.

Italy: Besides the Interprovincial Centre of Morena (Rome), which has an important editing house, there is the intention now to promote an interprovincial centre for vocations, for those who are at the very beginning.

Africa: There has already been collaboration in the English-speaking regions, above all with the theology centre in Nairobi. There is a desire to begin a project of collaboration with the French-speaking regions, with the participation of all those involved. Congo is cooperating in this, as is the Province of Malabar, in a mission to the Central African Republic. Again Congo has sent one of its religious to help in the Holy Land. Such support is very precious, and without it we would not be able to sustain many of our commitments, as for example in the Holy Land and Kuwait, and in others places both in the past and still today. Another example of this collaboration is the acceptance of students in the Provinces where they come to study languages. I would now like to refer above all to joint projects of mutual cooperation that are vital for the future.

On this point I should like to touch upon the willing cooperation between flourishing Provinces (which are mostly new) and Provinces with few vocations, so that the latter do not lose their important presence or heritage. The Lombardy Province has begun to seek and to agree help with Karnataka-Goa and with Madagascar. They have also slowly begun to collaborate in accepting young student priests in a plan of mutual benefit.

We wanted this Extraordinary Definitory to begin considering this issue of joint collaboration that every Province should think about, while not ignoring some of the difficulties. Certainly, from the point of view of the Order it would be preferable that instead of sending religious to help in a diocese with a contract, they are sent, in so far as possible, to a Province. This could be done in one of two ways: either, placing those that come to help in different communities within the Province that seeks help, or, the former take over a house within the said Province that would remain under the jurisdiction of the latter, and the new community, from concept of service, would be subject to the Province that owns the house.

We would like to draw your attention here to the Decree issued by the Definitory at its 45th session on 16th September 2004, regarding the resolution n°.117 of the General Chapter, about communities or persons at the service of a diocese within the territory of another circumscription of the Order. In it we reaffirmed, according to our legislation and tradition, that the fundamental

criterion for determining the limits of a Province is the territory within its frontiers. But this criterion is neither absolute nor eternal and is subject to the expansion and pastoral activity of the Order. For this reason, it is possible for a community to make a foundation within the territory of another Province, on condition that there is both a mutual agreement between the respective Provinces and also that there is approval from the Definitory.

The same is true for the presence of a religious community within the territory of another Province, even when it is not making a canonical foundation. Even in the case of a religious who wishes to reside, for legitimate reasons, in the territory of another Province, he should communicate this to the Provincial of the relevant Province.

These rules are clear and objective and, therefore, show us clearly how we are to relate to one another. At the same time, in their conception, they are open to the expansion of the Order and to pastoral necessities. It is true that they presume that there is a culture of dialogue and collaboration that facilitates harmony and vitality and is, therefore, effective.

Linked to the theme of collaboration is that of restructuring or, at least, what could be linked to it. The Definitory has pushed for what could be called a certain restructuring in Argentina. It was decided to form a General Delegation, principally, in order to combine the forces of both Delegations, of Andalusia and Krakow, for a single future project for Carmel in Argentina.

As for everything else, it would appear from dialoging with the Provinces that restructuring is more viable at a practical level, for example, in the area of formation. The restructuring of other juridical situations could be much more effective along these lines, although this does not rule out the intention of more direct restructuring. (Avila Document 2003, N°. 116, 118).

5. Culture

We would like to highlight the following points with reference to the promotion of culture.

In our visitations we encourage the friars to pursue specialized studies, within the possibilities and needs of their circumscription.

The Definitory in dialogue with the Faculty of the Teresianum is trying to renew the lecturers and the personnel needed there.

The commitment of the Definitory to Avila, Spain, is all part of our efforts to promote culture. The construction of a new centre and collaboration on different projects is all part of this effort and an opportunity for spiritual renewal.

The Seminarium Missionum: the Definitory has recently decided not to rent it out but rather to use it for the needs of the Order (as we will explain later). This new decision was based on two criteria: the communion of the Order and the promotion of culture.

The Order's Historical Institute (Avila Doc. 2003, N° 122). We have seen the need to educate some of our young Carmelites as specialists, who could be assigned to this Institute. We have searched for candidates in three Provinces, one had already come to Rome, but his health did not permit him to stay. However, we in the Definitory remain resolute in our search as the Provincials who are involved are well aware.

Nairobi (Kenya): The Definitory has accepted to sponsor the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation, which is part of the Tangaza College where our students from English-speaking Africa study. This will involve the assuming responsibility for the administration of the Centre and a certain financial help when this is necessary.

India: Here, besides the various centres and institutes of spirituality, there is an academic centre of theology "Jyothir Bhavan", in Kalamassery, in the Manjummel Province, in the same centre there is a "Carmelite Study Center for Asia".

Congo: In the General Delegation of the Republic of Congo, in Bukavu, there is an inter-congregational study and formation centre for philosophical studies which is based in our house and is administered by our friars.

We highlight the above facts, which are relatively new developments and of a certain prominence. We take for granted that the overall cultural situation is well known, for example, the many serious reviews that are published, there are many religious who are following specialist courses; some of these are at the same time dedicated to teaching in different faculties and involved in theological publishing.

6. The Regions of the Order

Each of the Definitors will speak about their respective regional areas. However it would be useful to remember and underline the following:

a) There is a real need to promote vocations in many parts of the Order, such as in most of Europe and North America (the United States and Canada). There needs to be a renewed enthusiasm, restrained but real; in other words, there needs to be a belief in our vocation, living it simply and authentically, and making it known above all through experience and the way we live in community.

b) There are large parts of the Order where discernment of vocations and personal accompaniment, together with an insight into the culture and mentality of the peoples, are particularly necessary.

c) It is gratifying to underline the Order's awakening in European and Eastern Countries that in the past had suffered various ups and downs and had been under a communist regime for a long time. It is a fragile situation for now, for understandable reasons, and deserves our attention and heartfelt commitment.

d) In the same way, the countries that are opening themselves up to the Order, such as Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, and Indochina and mainland China, present us with a challenge and a hope against the uncertainty of the future. We have the impression that they can be lands of real promise for the Order.

e) The Middle East, which from the beginning of the seventeenth century was the first missionary country of the Teresian Carmel, presents us with both anxieties and hopes. Kuwait is and will continue to be a missionary country: not in the sense of *ad gentes* because in Kuwait we minister to immigrant Christians. But, yes *ad gentes* in the sense that here, though the Order cannot pretend to take root, it is serving the dispersed People of God. A new Bishop, Camillo Ballin, a Comboni Father, was consecrated for this mission on the 2nd September of this year, without the "ius commissionis" being repealed - that is, the entrusting of the mission to the Order made fifty years ago by Pope Pius XII. The present missionaries and ourselves have decided to carry on for the love of the immigrant Christian community, which has seen our missionaries being formed and kindly and willingly works with them.

The Lebanon is a semi-province that little by little has consolidated and offers what it can in the way of help in the Middle-East, which due to circumstances cannot be much. The Holy Land will continue to depend on religious from other regions of the world. We have two places, Egypt and Iraq, which are now beginning to offer signs of hope. In Egypt there are vocations from the ancient Christian community, and in Iraq we have a group of five postulants in the small

formation community made up of three fathers. It is our duty to protect and support these vocations. In Egypt, where we are based in the well known shrine of St. Therese, a centre for ecumenical devotion and social work, we have a plan to constitute a formation community in a second house to receive possible vocations.

7. Entities dependent on the Definitory

The permanent community at the Teresianum, from 2004, also offers accommodation to the priest-students who are studying spirituality or are working on their theses.

The Faculty of the Teresianum (Avila Doc. 2003, N° 119). There has already been a reference to this. Afterwards we will read a report from the President of the Faculty. It is good to remember that the Teresianum is something of great value created by the Order and it is for the whole Order. What we invest in it, whether it be personnel or finance, is really for the good of the Order.

The International College. Between the end of the last scholastic year and the beginning of this one in Rome, we have had a few changes in the formation team for circumstances beyond our control, though the formation and atmosphere in the college were very satisfactory. The relations of the College to the permanent community of the Teresianum, which is a distinct and separate entity, are excellent.

La Scala (Rome). This continues to function normally. The general government keeps regular contact with those who administer the place and the students, and in its desire to be close to this institution of the Order it has renewed the statues.

We must always remember that the young priests sent to this house must accept to integrate into the life of the international Carmelite community. They should also remember that the undeniable aim of this community, together with their studies, is to live our Carmelite community life and create communion between the provinces of the Order.

Likewise we hope, in this case as in similar cases, that when it comes to money there is transparency, with regard to grants and financial assistance, with the Superiors of the house and the General Government, ,

The Seminary for the Missions. You know that the previous Definitory had decided to convert the Seminary for the Missions into a hotel. It did this when the priest-students had found badly needed space when they moved into the large historic building know as "La Scala", Rome (a short distance from the Teresianum), and into other properties in Rome, and, at the same time, it was faced with a situation of financial pressure. The present Definitory, at the 35th session, on 19th May 2004, examined the situation again and upheld the previous decision, for the same reasons. However, at the May session this year, faced with ever increasing difficulties in finding accommodation for our students, and with a gradually improving financial situation that gave us reason to be optimistic, we decided in the end that we could not do without this fine building for 18 years. Instead it is now destined to be a cultural and formative place for the Order. In effect, the reason for our decision was that we wanted to give priority to the communion of the Order, and having a place where our young people in specialization could come together seemed to us a very worthwhile way of doing this. At the same time, we would all like to promote the culture of the Order and, so, we will now have a building for the Provinces to do just that. Finally, this decision, that from a financial point of view is risky, was arrived at for the said reasons, and with the hope that the Order as a whole will respond with generosity to it for the sake of the Order.

I will not say anything now about the Israel-Egypt Delegation but leave it to the particular report of the Delegation, which will be more detailed(includes: the Stella Maris Project, Jerusalem, the Financial Commission and those involved with it, the sale of our property in Jerusalem and buying another property).

8. Lisieux and Fatima

The house of the friars in Lisieux (Paris Province) was re-inaugurated in May of this year. The Definitory considered it worthy of its special solicitude, because of the place's significance for the Church. And we exhort the Provinces to collaborate willingly, especially the Avignon-Aquitane Province for obvious reasons.

The aim of the foundation is pastoral, bringing a spiritual presence in collaboration with the pastoral activity both of the shrine and of the diocese, which would be in accordance with the place.

We also recommend that the place be used for promoting meetings of those who wish to study St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, and be a place of hospitality for those doing special research.

The Province of Portugal is planning to build a new house in Fatima, with the aim of collaborating in Marian pastoral activity around the shrine, above all promoting pastoral ministry for young people. It could also be a place that hosts theological meetings, especially in Marian theology. Although the availability of the planned house is still far off, we want to tell you about this for the importance it could have for the Order in the future. In a similar way to Lisieux, we would like an international community to be set in place, a prayerful, fraternal community, which would seek to offer pastoral help to pilgrims in different languages.

9. Centenaries

Elizabeth of the Trinity

The centenary dedicated to Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity will be celebrated between Trinity Sunday, 11th June 2006, and the same liturgical solemnity on 3rd June 2007. It will open with a solemn Eucharist presided by the Bishop of the diocese of Dijon, where Elizabeth lived as a child.

In France they are preparing talks, conferences, religious and cultural celebrations, on both a national as well as a local level.

A Concordance of Elizabeth's writings is about to be published, together with a new biography edited by Conrad de Meester (in 2006), as well as other publications.

Each country, province and community, is invited to organize a celebration in keeping with their circumstances, and especially to try to spread and assimilate the experience and spiritual doctrine of Blessed Elizabeth.

There are various editorial initiatives in Spain. In the Teresianum in Rome the "week of spirituality" for 2006 will be dedicated to her. In the Church of St. Teresa in Rome attached to the General House, there will be opening and closing celebrations. There is a film, on video and DVD, in French, Italian and English, prepared by Antony Sangalli and other collaborators.

The Rule of St. Albert

We have welcomed the proposal by the Definitory of the O.Carms to celebrate, in 2007, the eighth centenary of the Rule of St. Albert, in spite of the fact that a few years ago we celebrated the 750th anniversary of the Rule (of Pope Innocent). The chosen date is one of convenience, as we do not know the exact year when the Primitive Rule was written. It was considered fitting to publish a letter, of a vital, spiritual and pedagogical character and signed by both Generals. We would also like to ask the Pope to give a message. There will be liturgical celebrations with the participation of both Definitories in the Churches of the Order in Rome.

In Latin America the joint O.Carm – O.C.D. Commission has already prepared a congress to study the different facets of the Rule, and will take place in October 2006 in Mexico.

10. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns

With regards to growth the same that has been said as of the Friars can, in general, be said of the Nuns. There are places where numbers are going down (Europe, the United States and Canada, even if there are regions where there is stability and even a resurgence, as in Eastern Europe) and places where numbers are generally increasing: Asia, Latin America and Africa, as can be clearly verified by the statistics.

In our correspondence, and above all in our visits, we feel everywhere a strong sense of family and fraternity and communion with the Order.

We see that our charism is lived in different ways, because there are so many communities in different cultures. However, there is common heritage in a love for Carmel and for its spirituality and way of life in and for the Church, and a conviction of its importance today. There continues to be a problem regarding initial and ongoing formation in different continents. It is an arduous task in some parts of the world because of the problem of distance and the lack of facilities that in other parts are very accessible. Formation must be taken seriously, so that in this respect the contemplative life does not fall behind other forms of religious life. The words of *Vita Consecrata* on formation in religious life are applicable: "It (formation) must therefore provide a human, cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation which pays special attention to the harmonious integration of all its various aspects" (65). Formation is also a challenge with regard to the contemplative life, so that the formation of the whole person, which is what we are speaking about and what is desired, be in accordance with the vocation to the contemplative life, and, at the same time, it must contribute to the development of this life.

In meetings with communities and assemblies, I, personally, tell them in all sincerity that the starting point for the discernment of new vocations must be the awareness of their own contemplative vocation, accepted joyfully with the theological attitude of our spirituality.

All of us must assume more fully the words of *Vita Consecrata*: "Consecrated women therefore rightly aspire to have their identity, ability, mission and responsibility more clearly recognized both in the awareness of the Church and in everyday life" (57). Certainly, we friars have a long road ahead of us that covers respect which we should have for the Nuns; though it is also legitimate to express our opinions when asked.

11. The Carmelite Secular Order

We will read the report from the General Delegate, Fr Aloysius Deeney. In visits to the Provinces one can sense a bond between the secular Carmelites and the Order and the desire to deepen their knowledge of its spirituality. The meetings with the Visitor are not always easy due to distances and other circumstances, but the Superiors of the provinces and communities do everything possible to facilitate such meetings.

It is a multiform situation that is difficult to take in. Even though the situations are different there is a general need for a renewed formation, so that the vocation to the Secular Carmel is understood as a way of life, as a serious and inspired Christian commitment to the charism and spirituality of the Teresian Carmel, within a lay state. The General Delegate realizes that, faced with the impossibility of carrying out all of this by himself, he must direct his efforts to forming and coordinating assistants. The challenge for the assistants and all of us is how to collaborate with him to encourage formation and co-responsibility among the laity themselves in all aspects of their lay Carmelite life.

12. Relations with the O.Carms

The relations with our brothers, the O.Carms, are, for the most part, conditioned by the different circumstances in the regions. I believe we can acknowledge that the relations in Latin America are, without doubt, the best, due to the dynamism of the bilateral commission in

organizing initiatives and common activities. On the Definitory level we are continuing our meetings that first began while Fr Camilo Maccise was General. We meet twice a year in one of the General Curias in order to look at some issues of mutual interest; after which we eat together.

One significant result of this collaboration is the Carmelite dictionary, which has been worked on for some years and will be completed by 2006.

I have already referred to the celebration of the Primitive Rule.

Moreover, it seems to me that we do not need to force the collaboration, but rather, being open, to respond to needs and concrete situations as they arise.

13. The Missions

The Order is extending into different countries and cultures as never before in its history, just like the Church. This fact, which makes us hopeful and joyful, is the fruit of our openness to the missions. Not only European provinces, as in the past, but also Provinces from the United States, India and some other religious from Africa are participating in the mission *ad gentes*. In India there are the first steps to an inter-religious dialogue in some centres of spirituality.

We already know that missions were something that Teresa, our Mother, had in her heart and belong to the heart of the new Carmel, that was reborn from her experience of Christ and the Church and, also, humanity. The missionary commitment of the Order is a measure of the depth of its fervour. By this fervour, our missionaries should feel that they are an expression and fulfillment of the charism and that they are sent and accompanied by the Order. The spirit of our Mother, St. Teresa, does not allow us to withdraw and isolate ourselves. For this reason, I believe that in formation, i.e., in the communication of our vocation the missionary spirit must be more fervent and occupy a more central place. I would like to use this meeting of the Order to thank the missionaries on everyone's behalf for their generosity. And we are no less grateful, certainly, to the Discalced Carmelite nuns, who often have been the pioneers in courageously founding Carmels in missionary lands.

Santiago, Chile, Sept. 2005

Luis Arostegui, Sup. General