

Hopes and Challenges of the OCD Circumscriptions in India and Sri Lanka

Extraordinary Definitory, Santiago-Chile 2005
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I. INDIA

A) Lights and Hopes:

1. The Order of the Discalced Carmelites gives thanks to the Lord for the dynamic growth of our Order in India. With the abundance of vocations, the Order in India, has grown into 5 provinces (Malabar, Manjummel, Karnataka-Goa, Tamilnadu, South Kerala), the Commissariat of Delhi and the growing Missions of Andhra, Orissa, Ranchi and West Bengal.

2. **The community and prayer life** is good especially in the formed Houses, except those set apart for special apostolate or in the mission context.

3. Formation:

a) Having a big number of candidates is a cause of joy and hope for Our Order and this demands a great responsibility. All the Provinces are giving priority for formation and have set apart the major share of economy to form the formees.

b) A minimum of 12 years' training for our Clerical students.

c) All the Provinces have a 'Ratio Particularis' as basis of their formation programme. The Commissariat has made the decision to formulate one.

d) The academic grade is high and all our Provinces have their own Major Study Houses to blend both Carmelite way of life and personal attention. It is not practical to have a national study house with this high number of students.

e) However, suggestion was given to set up a common Theology House in North India, taking into account its cultural and missionary setting as different from South India.

f) The Carmelite training integrates the rich cultural heritage of India and topics are included both in Philosophy and Theology and social exposure programmes are organized by the Circumscriptions to understand and share the joys and sorrows of our People.

g) One year Regency, interrupting studies, is a period, introduced in India, to involve the candidate intensively to the community life, pastoral and missionary activities.

h) Inter Provincial Collaboration is maintained through the gathering of the Theology Students, Common 'Second Novitiate' programme and gatherings and animation programme for formators. IPCI president will inform you further about its activities.

4. Apostolate and Missionary Activities

Indian Carmel has a number of spirituality centers giving academic degrees for the religious and clergy and retreat centers for the people. These centers venture through different methods like charismatic, audio-visual, guided retreats, Retreat through Sacred music of India, 40 days desert experience etc. Provinces also dedicate their time for the good of the Secular Carmel and to the spiritual animation of our Nuns.

Taking into account our social situation, Provinces are involved in manifold social activities, empowerment of women and job-oriented programmes. They include Boys and Girls homes to give shelter and education to the poor children. Printing Sector is also worth mentioning.

5. Missions:

Ad intra: Manjummel Province: Andhra Vicariate, Orissa Mission, and the Latin dioceses of Madhya Pradesh. Malabar Province: Ranchi Delegation and 7 syro-malabar Dioceses (exclusive) out side Kerala. Tamilnadu Province: Chattisgarh & Andaman Nicobar Islands. South Kerala: West Bengal, Sikkim and Meghalaya.

Ad extra: Malabar Province: Ukraine Mission, collaboration with Genoa Province in central Africa. Manjummel Province: Indonesia. Karnataka-Goa Province: Tanzania and South Africa.

Tamilnadu Province: Sri Lanka

B) Challenges

1. Formation of the Formators
2. Number of vocations and the constant attention to maintain good quality of formation.
3. Vocation Promotion for Brotherhood and their proper training.
4. Greater attention and ongoing formation courses and meetings for our Young Priests both in the Provincial and national level.
5. Less availability and interest of friars for missions.
6. Study expense of our big number of students and the problem of Mass intentions
7. The possible dangers of regionalism, rite and other problems undermining the unity among Provinces.
8. Proper care to nurture Carmelite Spirituality and translation of the works of our Holy Parents and other Spiritual writers like Edith Stein, Elizabeth of Trinity into some of the prominent native languages.
9. Proper preparation of our friars for the spiritual animation of our OCD Nuns.
10. A common Theology House for North India

C) Special Initiatives for these Years: Together with the fraternal and pastoral visits, we have:

- i) **2005**: The First Regional Congress on Formation for Indian Carmel was held in Mysore from 22 to 27 August 2005. 35 Fathers involved in Formation took part in it. We dealt with some of the challenges of our times in Formation, like Discernment of vocation, Carmelite formation, Inculturation and Missionary Dimension and Psycho-social dimension. After the input sessions, they had group discussions to share their views and make solid suggestions to draw practical conclusions. As a result, we succeeded in formulating Operative Guidelines for our Indian Carmel in order to facilitate the apostolate of Formation in India.
 - ii) **2006** – OCDS Regional Congress for India and Sri Lanka
 - iii) **2007** – Regional Congress on Carmelite Liturgy and Prayer
 - iv) **2008** – Regional Congress for the Spiritual animators of our OCD Nuns

II) Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, we have only three monasteries of Nuns and a unit of the secular Carmel and have no community of friars. Nuns get good number of vocations. They need good ongoing Carmelite formation. As they did not come to a common agreement to form an association, it is not easy to undertake common programmes on On-going formation. The Center of the Order and the Indian Carmel help them occasionally as individual monasteries. Only our constant presence can make our Carmel grow in Sri Lanka and to ensure them spiritual animation. At the request of Fr.General, Tamilnadu Province has come forward to re-open our Mission, make foundations and promote vocations in Sri Lanka.