

## **Report of Fr. Stephen Watson, General Definitor**

Although I was elected a General Definitor in May 2003, I did not move to Rome until the first September meeting of the General Definitor. After the September meeting was over I devoted the next ten weeks to learning some Italian by attending a school four hours a day, five days a week. When I was asked what my work for the Order consisted of I said, "Learning Italian and eating pasta." It is not a bad life if you don't mind living in an office building. I must say that I have enjoyed very much the community of the Casa Generalizia which is the largest community I have ever lived in.

My portfolio, (I never had a portfolio before but that is what they like to call it in the Casa), consists of six provinces: The Dutch Province of the Netherlands, Malta of Malta, the Anglo-Irish Province excluding Australia which is a Regional Vicariate, and the three United States Provinces, that is, the California-Arizona, the Washington and the Oklahoma Provinces. I have been referred to as the Definitor for the English-speaking Provinces. This is inaccurate or, at least, imprecise. As a matter of fact, two of these Provinces, the Dutch and the Maltese, ordinarily conduct their community life in a language which is not English. The Oklahoma Province is recognized as bi-lingual, that is, English and Spanish.

It is obvious that there is not a geographical unity among these 6 provinces. In the United States the Order is not even organized as a geographical unity. The Carmelite community in Miami, Florida with a territorial jurisdiction that includes all of Southern Florida is grouped with Latin America under the care of Fr. Nicolas Garcia since it belongs to the Caribbean Vicariate of Castile, as do the two communities in the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico. The Carmelite community of the Krakow Province in Munster, Indiana which does not use English as its official language has been allotted a territorial jurisdiction comprised of several large mid-western States. They have had the right to accept novices since the 1950's when the community was canonically established. The same is true of the community of the Warsaw Province in Corona Beach, Florida which has a territorial extension as far as New Orleans. These communities are not represented in the coetus made up of the six Provinces in my portfolio.

In Canada we have the community of the Carmelites of the Avignon-Aquataine Province in Trois-Rivieres which is not in my "portfolio" whereas I do visit the Maltese community in London, Ontario. There is now a recognized community of the Korean Commissariat in Southern California. It is interesting to note the fact that in the United States and Canada there are canonically established communities of eight different Provinces. There are two additional Provinces with non-canonically established communities.

Although there is not a Conference of Provincials in the United States, the three Provincials of the United States generally meet twice a year. There is considerable collaboration among the three US Provinces especially in the area of formation. The OCD Provincials of the US also meet twice a year with the two O. Carm. Provincials. There exists a successful program of collaboration in the area of Carmelite spirituality and history called the Carmelite Institute based at Washington Theological Union in Washington D.C. Our Carmelite community in Washington D.C. has hosted numerous Carmelites students attending this program who have come from around the world, e.g. Africa, India, Australia, and Ireland. I should also mention the Institute of Carmelite Studies which is not to be confused with the just mentioned Carmelite Institute. The ICS as it is called has made Carmelite spirituality known throughout the English-speaking world by publishing many Carmelite books.

At this time there is no expansion of the Order in the US although the California-Arizona Province is experiencing an increase in vocations. In December this Province will open a new house of studies. But there is no expansion of the Order as such. However, there has been a serious commitment of these Provinces to develop the Order in East Africa, i.e. Kenya and Uganda. The Washington Province has made a considerable investment in Nairobi.

So far I have only talked about the United States. I am more knowledgeable about the Provinces there. I would like now to say a few words about the other three Provinces in my

Portfolio: the Anglo-Irish, Dutch and Malta Provinces. These Provinces belong to the European reality which is quite different from the United States. The Dutch Province is the only one on the continent proper. At one time there were over 70 members of this Province. Today they are quite reduced in numbers. The friars of the Order of Carmel are numerous in Holland and there is collaboration with them.

The Anglo-Irish Province is one of the larger Provinces in the Order and is the largest in the coetus. In recent years they have had to do some serious restructuring. Its biggest undertaking in the last ten years has been the establishment of the Order in Nigeria. They have made a big investment of men and resources. I predict that not too many years from now there will be a Nigerian Provincial. In Ireland and England they also have collaborative programs with the O. Carm. In Ireland the friars are especially close to the nuns.

Malta, the little island in the Mediterranean, is big in faith and heart. It is holding steady with vocations. Some of their formation is done in Italy. We can thank the Maltese Province for the existence of the Taiwan-Singapore Delegation, represented here by Fr. John Chua. The Malta Province has been important in sustaining our presence in Egypt and Israel. I should like to mention the years of service in Kuwait of the now retired Bishop Francis Micallef. They have been working hard in recent years to establish the presence of the order in English –speaking Canada.

I have conducted visits of all six of the Provinces assigned to my care. Three have already had the sexennial Pastoral Visitation. This meeting is the first time that the Provincials of these Provinces have met together during this sexennium. It will be a special opportunity for them to talk about the ways in which they can best support each other through some kind of practical collaboration. It is a chance for me to see what kind of service the General Definitors can give them